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NAS
Gloss

VAN ALDEN, JR.

OR,

A NEW YORK GENTLEMAN.

BY MAXIMILLIAN.

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BY
SARAH GLASS

PREFACE.

In writing this novel, I have studiously avoided swelling its pages with long drawn out descriptions usually thought essential by writers of fiction, such as overwrought love scenes, the estrangement of lovers brought about by intrigue and unnatural causes, villains triumphant over noble heroes and heroines, and the like; so unreal, and seldom true to the life, finishing with "All 's well, that ends well."

From a sense of conviction that fiction more akin to life cannot fail to entertain, but will also tend to instruct the mind, purposes every author should hold dear to his heart, I have in this, my first effort, adhered to both principles.

Poetry is the diction of an imagination, and the poet may entirely digress from the real, his object being to uplift our thoughts towards the highest pinnacle of the mind's realm. Prose should produce, as near as possible, a picture of life, in which we can recognize our undreamed of selves; and that which may become an incentive to us for imitation, or will make to us odious all the author has held up in execration. Delectable descriptions of an imaginary existence, of improbable heroes and heroines, sink too deep into the minds of the young and unfit them for the prosaic life within their reach, that might not have been void of happiness to them, but for the *ignis fatuus* of an overwrought romantic imagination.

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It is a stubborn fact that there is romance in truth, but little truth in romance. Let not the mind be crowded with

anomalies, impossible of realization, which must tend to a non-reconciliation with what there is allotted to us; and we will conform ourselves more readily to the real romance of our existence. The millions of misspent and shipwrecked lives, is not alone owing to the fact that only a minority of the actors on the stage of life can climb to prominence, affluence, and competency, or are qualified to satisfy the cravings of the heart; but in a great measure to a phantasm, a proclivity for the unattainable, which overstrained fiction has so temptingly placed before the susceptible mind—the taste of which is denied them—and they can find no solace in what stern reality offers.

Men entering the arena of life, to fight for an existence, are apt to rub off the impressions conceived in early dreamy youth. It is the woman, who, unable to divest herself of the finer clay of which she is formed, remains fettered to her dreamy land; for which nature had elected her, and romancers nourished, who suffers most. She dreams visions of happiness and bliss, in the love of one, whom her imagination has placed upon a high pedestal, and on which the elected of her heart endeavors to maintain himself. Later, tiring of the mask, he descends from it with impunity, caring little for the effect his descent may have upon her. If blighted hopes and crushed hearts seek forgetfulness in the frivolities of life, and thereby destroy a home, in which happiness was denied her, is the woman solely to blame?

Nothing will cure frail human nature from novel reading; it has been ever thus! Thus it will continue; no harm can come of it, if fiction and fanciful pictures of men and women

are made life-like specimens of current life. I have drawn characters from immediate life as they are, or ought, or ought not, to exist. If I succeed in interesting the reader, I will rejoice at my effort in having kept close to my line of demarkation, viz.: the possible, and the natural.

Collected by S. Davis
552 W. 185 St., N Y C

CHAPTER I.

The year 1864 will forever be remembered in the annals of the history of the United States, for that year witnessed the closing scenes of the fierce struggle raging between the North and South. Life at that epoch went on, not only in the usual routine, but even more gaily than ever. Balls, parties, flirting, wooing, and giving in marriage, more than usual. The broken peace of the Union had given an impetus to existence, and a greater zest for enjoyments, snatched like a soldier's revel upon the eve of battle.

The town, which for the purpose of our story we will call Morganville, had never been so gay as in the beginning of that year, even if daily bulletins brought the sad tidings of thousands slain and maimed, thereby multiplying the numbers of widows, orphans and the bereaved homes of parents.

The town was crowded with people. There was more business now than ever before. Money circulated freely, and with the violent jars of party strife came a more animated spirit of recklessness and gaiety. The blood circulated with rapidity in the sluggish veins of the hitherto dormant town, and it was fast undergoing metamorphosis. The former dull place had been converted into a thriving, and rapidly growing, prosperous city.

Morganville stood—we may as well say stands—at the head of a picturesque, land-locked bay, surrounded by sloping hills and rich corn fields, divided into larger and smaller farms, and is screened by a range of hills of mod-

erate elevation, which are termed by some mountains. Its pier, and a few scattered fishing hamlets around the bay, added to the picturesque aspect of the place, of which many natives spoke with pride, and which will never be forgotten by them, wherever fortune may lead or drive them.

Ten years previous to the opening of this chapter, the inhabitants of Morganville consisted of a clergyman, a doctor, the postmaster, a few custom-house officials, and second-class storekeepers, all seemingly gentlemen, a few maiden and widow ladies, with the usual artisans, laborers, and lounging young men; some of the latter connected with the wealthy farming population. Now, thriving factories, palatial stores and houses mark the sites of former plain cottages, dingy stores and vacant lots, wherein the cows held their siestas.

Among the noted families of the place are the Powells, the Browns, the Armitages and the Grants.

On the 14th of March, 1864, Morganville was startled by the sad tidings that Colonel James Powell had met with a soldier's heroic death, and that Mrs. Powell, on hearing of her sad bereavement, had given birth to a baby girl—her first born—herself dying an hour later. The faithful wife had joined her beloved husband in eternity.

The infant, an orphan in the hour of its birth, aroused the sympathy of the good people of Morganville. Mothers with infants vied in offering to take care of the orphan babe. Judge Brown, the only surviving brother of Mrs. Powell, placed the infant with Mrs. Betts, a poor, but respectable woman, worthy of the trust placed in her.

The child grew up amongst the kind-hearted people of

the place, to whom her spirit, her childish beauty and engaging innocence greatly endeared her.

Having reached the age of twelve, Helen was placed by her guardian in the care of Mrs. Loewenhaupt, the principal of a well-known educational institution.

The kind-hearted lady embraced the orphan tenderly, saying: "Yes, dear child, I will love you, and be to you more than a teacher;" which promise she adhered to faithfully.

Helen, from girlhood, had thought and acted much for herself, so far as she was capable. Through this, and from an inherent original strength of character, sprung later her mental qualities: the habit of self-command and self-reliance, enabling her to act in all emergencies with a ripened understanding and decision. Her mind took the noblest form, even before she could have realized her feelings, or reasoned upon her convictions, what was due to herself. Nothing base or mean could approach her, much less taint her mind. If her character is to be understood, it is necessary to state that it is embodied in the phrase: "I disdain to do this, or I despise that, because I think it is not right."

Helen remained under Mrs. Loewenhaupt's care until she had attained her eighteenth year. She had grown remarkably tall and graceful. The swan-like bend of her neck and head, the curve of the back, and the fall of her shoulders into the graceful arms, made her in reality one of those models for the sculptor of which so many are described in books, and so very few are seen in real life. She looked neither a Juno nor a Minerva, but more like a youthful Hebe upon a high scale. Her brilliant and healthy com-

plexion was exactly what we desire to see. Sometimes, if provoked, a haughty expression would gather in an instant and cloud her face. It was but a passing shadow, however, flying before those sunny ambushed smiles and dimples lurking in the cleft chin, or about the corners of her mouth, in which her better self took refuge, and played at bo-peep with the fascinated gazer.

"My dear Helen," said her teacher, and more than friend, on the last day of the girl's happy sojourn under her roof, "nature has not been chary with you, but I feel more pleased to know that you are otherwise well fitted to enter the world of a woman's life, in which you cannot fail to find and confer happiness. Be always true to yourself, and if clouds come to darken some hours of your precious life, from which none of us are exempt, the sunshine in your own heart will surely assist you to dispel them."

Helen entered the world under the guardianship and care of her uncle, Judge Brown.

Robert Brown, as the Judge was called, when a young man possessed ample means, enabling him to follow the bent of his inclinations. He led a roving life, plucking from it, in full measure, the ingredients most palatable to his taste, until satiated. At core sound, he returned to his native place unscathed by the contact, and wiser by the experience gained.

We meet him a man about fifty-five years of age, who had attained distinction in his profession, and universally respected by all who knew him.

On Helen, the only child of his dearly beloved and never forgotten sister, he lavished all the warmth of his tender

heart, and the orphan girl clung to dear Uncle Bob, as she called him, with child-like tenderness.

"My dear uncle," Helen once addressed him, "you must have been crossed in love, have you not? How can I think otherwise, when you, to whom home is so endeared, and who has a heart that feels so tenderly for his kindred, be she even his sister's child, has chosen the solitary life of celibacy."

"Marriage, dear Helen," replied the Judge, "is like a lottery—a game of hazard—that may shipwreck our life, and rob us of the peace of our soul. Love, my dear child, pertains too often of the flesh only; 't is too often but a fiery temperament, a delirium; a state in which our reasoning becomes impaired, and what we believed to be love proves to have been but a passion. I did not meet the woman of my soul; love for flesh and blood alone could not have built that sanctuary of a home before which alone I could have remained a steadfast worshiper."

"Are you sure that you have looked for a soul-mate in the right direction?" said Helen. "I hope and trust that the world is not wanting in good and true women, and that one need not look for such in vain—Diogenes-like, looking for honest men."

"There, dear, I stand reprimanded," said the Judge. "You are right; there have been, there are, and always will be, scores of good and noble women living; and as you remarked, I may have looked for such in wrong spheres and places, and must now take meekly the punishment of grim bachelorhood. I don't mind it, though, having you to cheer and brighten my lonely days."

"But I may leave you, dear uncle, some of these coming days, unless, like yourself, I should decline to take chances in the lottery of life, as you call it," said Helen, with a smile. "Until I chance it, and as long as you will it, I'll gladly share your home."

CHAPTER II.

Judge Brown and Helen attended the reception given in honor of the nuptials of Mr. and Mrs. Armitage, Jr.

"Who is that handsome girl, posing so gracefully, next to that elderly gentleman?" inquired Frank Van Alden, of Mrs. Armitage, Sr., the mother of the bridegroom.

"A Miss Powell; and the gentleman with her, is Judge Brown, her uncle and guardian," replied the lady. "Let me introduce you to her; she is indeed a lovely girl, an orphan, and an heiress."

Van Alden stopped suddenly in his progress towards Helen.

Mrs. Armitage looked at him in surprise. Had he changed his intention of accepting the introduction she had proffered! At last she asked, "Is the lady less attractive to you, because of her being an heiress?"

"Look, Mrs. Armitage," replied Van Alden, with a smile, "the young lady is now besieged by a dozen gentlmen; I would be the thirteenth. It is an unlucky number, and therefore I beg to be excused, for the present, at least."

Later in the evening, Helen returned from a quadrille to the reception room in company with the bride, who led her towards the balcony, where her husband and Van Alden were chatting.

"Miss Powell, a very dear friend of mine," said the bride, "Mr. Van Alden, a friend of my husband and therefore also a friend of mine," and added, pleasantly, "you must become friends too."

"I gladly avail myself of every opportunity to make friends," said Helen, with a smile.

"I have no doubt," replied Van Alden, "that on every occasion, if you wish it, you add them to your list. I will deem it an honor to be counted one of them."

A bit of flattery, thought Helen; but permissible; unlike the nothingness she so often had heard on similar occasions.

Van Alden conversed with dignified reserve, without the usual apparent anxiety to please, like the many, when face to face with handsome women.

At last he said, "I perceive that you are not a devotee to terpsichorean pleasures, which must be regretted by many gentlemen present this evening."

"I do not hold Puritan-like doctrines, that dancing is satan's invention," said Helen, mirthfully; "I take part in many, but do not care for dances that exhaust the body, and therefore the mind."

"Exhaust the mind, you say?" said Van Alden. "I thought that on such occasions one does not heed bodily fatigue, because of the pleasure the mind evinces amidst the brilliancy of surroundings, the delightful strains of music—such as we hear now—and because of a consciousness of admiration your sex inspires; such influences, do they tire the mind?"

"I hardly know how to reply," said Helen. "The joyous faces, full of mirth and frolic, undoubtedly denote pleasure; but notice the panting for breath—the jostling against one another; think of the heat, the lassitude, and headache following in their wake, and perhaps you may justify my dislike for their kind."

"What do you think of Mr. Van Alden, Helen," asked the bride, later in the evening.

"I don't think of him at all, just now," replied Helen, with a mirthful twinkle in her eyes; "but as soon as my thoughts revert to the gentleman, I will communicate them to you, Phœbe, should you still feel inclined to know them."

Van Alden had received from the Judge and Helen an invitation to call. Having availed himself of the welcome offer, he prolonged his sojourn in Morganville.

On the eve of his departure for New York, he and Helen were walking in the garden attached to the Judge's palatial residence. He spoke of his regrets, because of the necessity of his leaving Morganville, and of his intention to return in the near future. "I must confess," he said, "that I have spent the most pleasant hours under your hospitable roof; may I hope that on my return, I will be again a welcome visitor? Such an assurance, Miss Powell, will heighten the pleasure my anticipated coming gives me and will hasten its advent."

"If my assurance of your welcome will effect all that you have kindly stated, I give the same with pleasure," said Helen. To which she added, "My dear uncle joins me in what I have said, and expresses through me his regrets because of his enforced absence this evening."

Van Alden had left. Helen, after re-entering the house, seated herself at the open window, from whence she could discern his receding figure.

"He is a fine specimen of the human mould, that quickens the pulsations of the heart, as Uncle Bob says," mused

Helen. "I admit that I admire that handsome man very much! and that I felt pleased with his attentions and the deference with which he treated me; and that he has not taken me for an object that must be amused and courted with flattery—the outcome of ignorance and deceit."

"If men really admire us," Helen had once said to a friend, "they should express it least with words."

"But if they have no chance to express it otherwise?" inquired her friend.

"What use to express it at all," replied Helen.

Our heroine was conscious of the fact that Van Alden admired her. "He admires many others likewise; perhaps more than he does me. He may have felt pleased to have met me and to beguile some of his leisure hours. Well! he was welcome to the pastime I afforded him; for have not I received a similar advantage—and, like myself, he will soon forget the incident; that is the offshot of it!" With these thoughts Helen left the window. At the shrill whistle of the incoming express, her thoughts once again reverted to the departed guest.

CHAPTER III.

Frank Van Alden belonged to one of the foremost families in New York. He had lost both his parents in a terrible railway catastrophy. By his father's will, Reuben Van Alden, the brother of the testator, was appointed Frank's guardian. The will stipulated that, after a collegiate course, and a journey abroad, his son should enter the counting house of Van Alden & Co., of which the testator had been a member. But for the stern command of his guardian, Frank would have preferred his life of pleasure and ease in Paris and London, to the routine of business awaiting him at home.

Arrived at home, his guardian remonstrated with him because of his extravagance abroad, and insisted on his applying himself with as much zest to the career his father had chosen for him, as he had shown in the pursuit of pleasure.

If he had to comply with the mandates of his uncle, for which he felt no inclination, he would at least please himself in his mode of living. He was soon the boon companion of the gay, and the gayest of them all. On his becoming of age, he entered into the uncontrolled possession of a princely fortune, besides an interest in the firm of Van Alden & Co.

At the time he is introduced to the reader, he had attained his twenty-eighth year. A strikingly handsome man, he is one of the foremost and most popular young bachelors in the State. He loved pleasure and lived but to

enjoy life, everybody and everything catering to his tastes; his existence is a continuous, intoxicating draught.

Receiving from Ralph Armitage, a former college chum and boon companion, a pressing invitation to be best man at his approaching nuptials with Phœbe Grant, Frank had complied, as we are aware, with his friend's request. On their meeting, Van Alden exclaimed, "Old boy, I am really anxious to meet your Phœbe; tell me, in confidence, how she managed to make a benedict of such a wild chap as you have been; of such a hale and jolly bacholor, you told me you intended to remain. What a priceless recipe hers would be to our matrimonially inclined charmers!"

"Phœbe is, indeed, a dear, good girl, to whom the jolly bachelor, as you call me, had to surrender, *nolens volens*," said Ralph. "In Morganville we have but the routine of work; the only excitement we know of is courtship, love and marriage. With an indescribable longing for the former frolics and gaities of our set, I felt at one time like joining you again, but my father's heart being set on his only son becoming his successor in business, to earn the dollars, instead of only spending them, and remembering my filial duty, I tried my very best to please him. It was a pretty hard task at first. Now I am not only reconciled, but well satisfied with my lot."

"And you are about to crown your happiness with matrimony," remarked Van Alden, with a smile.

Ralph gazed into his friend's face and said, "I know your idea about love and matrimony. I once held similar views. Now, I am glad to state, that I will make Phœbe my wife, because of my deep love and affection for her.

Frank," Ralph continued, "you are blessed with everything life can bestow on mortals, except the blessing of the love of parents and for parents. Had you, like myself, witnessed their life of devotion for each other, and felt their love for you, their care for your welfare and well being, untainted in mind and heart, you would have become as readily a disciple to their life as myself."

"Your parents are one of the few exceptions. Mine may have been like them as regards domestic bliss. How many such exceptions will you find?" asked Van Alden.

"All our acts in life, if they are the outcome of our follies, must entail on us misery; not less, an ill assorted marriage," said Ralph. "Marriage requires so close an intimacy that there must be a perfect agreement and sympathy with each other's tastes and feelings. Those who are about to wed, if they stultify their sense to the fact that he or she is wanting in the requirements which would make it in truth a union of hearts and souls, commits an act of suicide because of their distorted minds at the time. You look at me in surprise, because of what I have said! Yes! the last few years of my life, in the pursuit of my daily vocation of usefulness, living in an atmosphere of true happiness, I thought of the fleeting years of early manhood wasted in pursuits of an aimless, if even joyful existence, and on the many years of our mature life full of regrets, because of lost opportunities. I counted the cost involved, and did not care to take the risk. I love, and I hope and trust that this love of mine is a true and manly germ which nature has implanted within our hearts, and not merely a passion, such as your love for the crayon artist

has proven. Come, Frank, let us hurry to the house, and there you shall meet her who had no small share in framing thus my mind."

CHAPTER IV.

Van Alden had loved a beautiful girl, the only child of a once prominent portrait painter, who, having lost his eyesight, lived on a small income which his daughter supplemented by her earnings as a crayon artist.

Clare Gray, with her large, lustrous eyes, sylvan-like figure, exquisite taste in dress, if not entirely by the dictates of fashion, yet strikingly suiting her comeliness, was indeed a lovely apparition.

Van Alden's eyes, transplanted from the canvas adorning the walls of the art gallery to that of the lovely picture of real life before him, gazed at the crayon artist with intense admiration. "Jack," said he, addressing his friend, "what a lovely girl she is. If our great painters could, life-like, print her on canvas, what value would her picture represent?"

"Why, Frank," said Jack Wilmot, "she represents far greater value as she stands there. Her face on canvas you may willingly buy, say for fifty thousand dollars, but you might be tempted to offer her your fortune, and throw your name into the bargain, if need be, should she understand to manage you cleverly after she got you in her meshes. I have seen many such living pictures I could have treasured, had I possessed the means for investment; lucky fellows, like yourself, made the investments, and I am informed that they rue the bargain. You will fall in love with that beauty; I can perceive as much! If you do, you must stick

to your common sense, for which I always gave you credit, and it will do you no further harm than bleed your pocket, and that you need not mind. As I know the metal you are made of, and need not fear on that score, I will give you a chance. I don't know her, but know her escort. I suppose she is his *inamorata*. He is a sculptor, of Italian descent, by name, Martini. Take care of his stilletto, should you succeed in arousing his jealousy."

The two friends then placed themselves before a Murillo which Clare Gray and her escort gradually approached.

With a pleasant "How are you, Martini," Jack Wilmot shook the sculptor's hand. The customary introduction of the others followed.

Clare Gray is not the creation of the pen, nor a romance. Clare lived in our present age. Having lost her mother, when a child, she became the constant companion of her father, who, as her sole instructor and guide, neglected nothing to acquaint her with everything he thought she should know of real life, so that the knowledge of what passed, and passes daily, should serve to guard against all harmful influences of our modern society, to which a poor and handsome girl so often is exposed. Grown to womanhood, the companionship of her sex, in her station of life, fell short of being congenial to her; her peculiar education and mode of life accounting for it. She preferred that of her father, and his friends proved pleasant companions to her at home and on their rambles. Later, her father's health and eyesight failing, she applied herself to help maintain their modest but pleasant home. Occasionally, on her father insisting, she would go forth in company with one or the

other of his trusted friends; and on one of these occasional rambles through the Art Exhibition she had met Van Alden, as described.

Susceptible to everything beautiful in nature and art, she would gaze upon a perfect human face and form with as much delight as upon an exquisite mould of art. It is therefore conceivable that she admired the handsome, polished Van Alden.

Our hero's conquest was not a "*veni, vidi, vici.*" He whom society flattered, whom the most lovable of that society sought, could not boast of such a conquest. He won Clare by the fervor with which he had pleaded his love, by the assiduity of his attentions, and a demeanor nigh approaching reverence.

Her doubts and fears allayed, she followed the dictate of her heart, that had long already responded to his. Her love ultimately made her his abject slave.

CHAPTER V.

Adjoining a village close to the Jersey shore, in an unpretentious but well-appointed cottage, Clare Gray had lived the last four years with her child and invalid father.

Van Alden had insisted on his right to provide for his future wife and the mother of his child, as he then said.

From a preference for seclusion, until he could bring her to his home, Clare had chosen the cottage we find her in.

"'T is sufficiently remote from New York, yet easily accessible to you, dear Frank," she had told him. Here she had led a happy existence, until!—

Van Alden, the most ardent lover, who had delighted in his daily visits to his Clare, as he called her, could not sufficiently express to her the grief and disappointment he felt if he missed the boat that would bring him to her. It pleased Clare so much to hear him say this. Gradually he failed to come for days, attributing it to pressing business requirements. But when he came, his affectionate endearances satisfied her, as much as she deplored the circumstances enforcing the frequent and long separations.

Clouds at last had gathered upon the horizon of her happiness. Her lover's fleeting visits of late, if they brought some sunshine to her, his parting left no trace of it in her heart. The outpouring of her love, to which he had so fervently responded, found in him now but a passive toleration. A change was obvious; something was about to happen; something of a most direful possibility.

Protected from the receding rays of the sun, under the veranda fronting the cottage, Clare is seated, gazing expectantly upon the outstretched waters of the bay. In the far distance she discerns the mail-boat gliding swiftly toward N—. At the further end, under the veranda, her blind father relates to his grandchild (a lovely girl about four years of age) a fairy tale, to which little Flora listens with childlike rapt attention. Occasionally the child gazes toward its mother with an expression of glee upon its face, because of the wonders grannie had unfolded to her intelligent comprehension. The mother would smile encouragingly on her child, and turn again toward the object of her attentions.

The boat had now reached the landing stage. Upon Clare's pallid face had spread a crimson flush. Frank had in his letter informed her that he would reach N— by the last boat, which was the one that had now landed. With eager glances she scanned the open landscape upon which he must soon appear.

The boat sped again on its way. The passengers had dispersed for their homes, but he came not.

Clare's face now assumed its wonted pallor; she was still gazing on the pathway leading to the cottage. "He may have met with some delay on landing," she soliloquized, and resolved to meet the belated traveler.

She soon, however, returned with a heavy heart. "Perhaps he had missed the boat. He will come tomorrow! She was sure he must! He may be ill and cannot come! And she here, unable to attend to his wants! If something unnatural should happen to him! She shuddered at the

mere thought. How many other thoughts racked her brain, so full of fears and hopes!

Hearts will cling with tenacity to hopes. Hers likewise clung to one, "that an unmeaning cause only had prevented Frank's coming."

The servant had entered, bringing two letters.

With anxious, feverish haste, Clare tore the cover enclosing Van Alden's missive and read as follows:

DEAR CLARE: I am very sorry that I must disappoint you. An unexpected event calls me to Morganville. My friend Armitage requires my presence there by Wednesday at the latest. I will leave New York by the first express this evening, and must therefore postpone my coming to you for a few days. I hope and trust that you will not chide me because of my disappointing you. Keep good cheer. With love and kisses to you and dear Florie.

Your FRANK.

The letter dropped from her trembling hand; her whole frame shook with the agitation the missive had caused, and, gazing at her child, who held the letter she had dropped, she snatched it to her breast and covered its face with caresses. The child's endearances, lavished on her in return, seemed to soothe her agitation.

"I have a letter for you, father dear," said Clare. "It bears the postmark Rome. I also received a letter from Frank, in which he informs me that an urgent business engagement necessitates his absence for a few days longer."

Her father's hands twitched nervously as he listened to

Clare's mournful voice, and he said: "How much longer, my child, will your husband continue this masquerade? I must speak to you for once, even if what I say proves painful to you. My heart feels sore at the knowledge of his neglect, and that the companionship of your husband is denied to you for weighty reasons, as you and he call them. These reasons have stretched to a length honesty would hardly warrant. They threaten your happiness and undermine your precious life. Yes, dear child, I cannot withdraw what I have said, although you will again try to appease my apprehension.

"My sight has failed me long ago, my health ebbs fast from me; a frame like mine can but poorly bear the burden the knowledge of your unhappiness makes it. Before I leave you forever—there, darling, surely I must leave you some of these coming days, like you yourself must once leave those you love," said he, endeavoring to still Clare's sobs. "I must know that the curtain is lifted that shrouds your existence. My eyes, could they but guide my tottering feet, I would step before those proud money-bags and thunder into their ears that you never sought that scion of their race, nor their lucre. Nor do you claim their lucre now! As an honest wife, and the mother of his child, you claim the right of your husband's protection, which has been withheld from you long enough through no fault of yours.

"My dear child, beware! A husband, if he be but an occasional guest to his hearth in the honeymoon of wedded life, becomes in after years an entire stranger to it."

"Father," said Clare, "do not judge too hastily. A man

like Frank, with duties to fulfill—business as well as social —from which under existing circumstances he cannot well absent himself at will, has often absence enforced on him against his own desire. 'T is true, of late, his coming here is of longer interval than could make me feel content. But I remember that you often spoke of the evil of entire domestication" (Clare saying this in a tone indicating cheerfulness) "and that we must cordially wish for the husband's enjoyments beyond the threshold of our homes, if we care to enhance his longing for the greater happiness and joys awaiting him at his own fireside. Why, then, should I feel as unhappy as you try to make me believe I am? Would you, dear father, have me believe that he, whom I could but wrong because I love him and remain true to him, would willingly grieve me because he loves me? No, father, I have not lost faith in Frank, and I must further abide by his wish for secrecy, if he thinks it prudent and to his interest. Be at peace with your thoughts, fear not, the future of your Clare is safe, at least in His keeping," looking toward heaven as she said the last words. "Banish your sombre visions. To me the future looks bright enough, even for my most sanguine hopes and wishes."

Clare now opened the letter addressed to her father and read the contents.

Dear and Beloved Friend: I take pleasure in informing you that I have concluded to undertake the execution of some sculptural work in New York. I will leave Rome within a few weeks for the States for that purpose. Yes, dear friend, once more I will return to my native land—the

land of the free—to remain as long as my restless spirit contents itself to stay. I look forward to my coming with great pleasure, because it will afford me the happiness to meet dear friends. I trust that Providence will grant me the felicity of finding you restored to health. Kindly express my best wishes to your dear daughter, her husband and child.

Assuring you of my most sincere and undying friendship, I remain,

Yours truly, MARTINI.

Clare's face, on reading these lines, had turned ashy white. Her father, delighted with the tidings read to him, said:

"He returns at last! How kind in him to send me such welcome news. He must have divined that I longed for his presence."

Saying this, the blind artist fell into a reverie.

Their thoughts were bent upon the same object. The father wishing in his innermost heart that his child had become the honored wife of that noble fellow, that triumphant disciple of a glorious art.

Martini had loved Clare, and her father had encouraged his attentions, expressing a hope that she could reciprocate the feeling. Clare had informed her father that she could only consider Martini a dear friend. To please him she would continue their friendly relationship. The only encouragement she gave Martini at the time consisted in telling him "that her heart was fancy free."

Clare felt dismayed at the knowledge of Martini's com-

ing and finding her the mistress of his rival and not his lawful wife.

Father and daughter had separated for the night.

The latter entered her room, and, gliding noiselessly toward her slumbering child, imprinted on its innocent brow a motherly, loving kiss, then approaching the balcony, she stood there motionless, with her hands clasped to her breast, staring into the peaceful heaven before her.

Her life's blood still coursed violently through her veins, but she felt sore and faint to death, as if struck down by an invisible blow. Only lately the universe had seemed too small to contain her happiness. She had cared for naught that the future could offer more; now her brain is in a whirl. She had sinned. If she had, it was not with knowledge; and for whom she sinned, could heaven have chosen him the instrument of her torture?

With a groan akin to despair, she sought her bed, and, throwing herself upon it, buried her face in the pillows as if she could thereby banish the sad visions.

CHAPTER VI.

Reuben Van Alden, a man of some sixty-five years, upon whom time had left no tell-tale mark, for he always had smooth sailing on the waves of life, could be met daily, plodding along the streets in a manner void of offence. Without a trace of pride, with an almost rustic simplicity and honesty of appearance, he made friends at first sight. He could hardly make enemies, if he would. Yet he is proud, and goes hand in hand along, in all the notions and traditions of his class.

His conscience and character compound matters amicably. He advocates equality, social and political, in the South, and holds himself aloof from it in New York. In politics a republican, and in mind an aristocrat. Such is the uncle of Frank, the head of the house of Van Alden & Co.

We find the old aristocrat seated in his library reading the *Herald*, in which occupation he is interrupted by the man servant announcing: "Master Frank solicits the pleasure of your company."

On the entrance of his nephew he smiles pleasantly and beckons Frank to a seat near his own, saying: "I am glad to see you home again. Country life in Morganville must have had some attractions for you, else you would not have tarried there thus long. You look remarkably well. Yes, my boy, early to bed and early to rise, makes man healthy, happy and wise. There is great truth in that proverb. Confound our modern electric lights that make our streets

so attractive to you men. In my time the oil lamps, dimly burning, made them but the refuge of blackguards and cut-throats after dark. 'T is something of import that brought you here. You do not often seek me in my home. My old-fashioned, quiet life does n't suit my modern nephew. I am no companion for the gay Lothario that you are. And yet the only brother of your dear father has a claim upon some of your spare time, which you seem to begrudge me." Continuing, after a pause, he said: "Young Armitage is married. Well, if such a wild chap, of whom you often spoke, has at last settled down quietly, I will not despair on your score. Young blood must be bled, if it shall flow rationally in after years; but it must not be sapped to its last drop. Don't get impatient," he said, noticing Frank's look toward the door. "I would fail in the dictates of my conscience and in my love for you, should I longer neglect speaking to you on a subject which is of serious import to you and me. Unbridled youth, if it indulges in the excesses of our modern times, must, on approach of manhood, grasp the more serious import of our life; else the effect of the dissipation has poisoned body and mind. God help him, then!

"To you, Frank, the last progeny of our name, will be left an edifice of no mean dimensions. Your father and myself had an honorable share in its erection. To you will be delegated the duty, if not to add to its lustre, at least to maintain it in its present sound condition. Horse-racing, yachting, club gaieties, and love intrigues with women, venal to the best-filled purses, cannot fit you for the honest fulfillment of those duties awaiting you. Am I wrong, if I

doubt that such a life can be the goal and ambition of a Van Alden?"

Frank had risen from his chair, stung to the quick by the cutting words of his uncle. But the kind, fatherly look meant no insult.

"My dear uncle," said he, "you draw no flattering picture of my life. I hope you are aware of your exaggeration, and that you draw it only in glaring colors to make such a life odious to me. Very flattering, in so far that you do not believe me beyond redemption. My doings must have been reported to you by your friends, who can be no friends of mine. I admit that I do not lead such a life as you and our forefathers have led. You must take into consideration that the dimly-lighted streets had no attractions then. That accounts for your deserting them at night. Had they been lighted by electricity then, as now, who knows to what hour, long after midnight, you 'd have yet enjoyed its glare?

"You admit, uncle, that young blood must be bled. Mine continues to circulate pretty boisterously, and can yet stand some bleeding. Be assured that I will not allow it to be sapped. I know that you would like to see me settled a pater familias to secure our proud edifice an heir. To prove to you that appearances are often deceptive, and that my mind has grasped the object of man's existence, I acquaint you with the fact that I seriously entertain thoughts of marrying; provided the choice I make will meet with your approval.

"As you are the only guardian of our good name, myself but a scapegoat, unable to undertake that duty, you

have a right to see that she, whom I chose, is worthy of sharing the same with me. I will, therefore, subject her pedigree to your strict scrutiny, and will abide by your decision, provided the same proves to my liking. Should you object, because of her pedigree, you will force me to throw to you the gauntlet of obedience. So that I don't subject the proud name of Van Alden to a mesalliance, I will then call myself Herr Von Alden. You must hereby perceive that the aristocrat will cling to me. The "Von" I will purchase of some impecunious Serene Highness, of a German principality, with the fortune my bride will bring me."

The old aristocrat, elated by his nephew's humorous communication, implying a fulfillment of his long-cherished desire, grasped Frank's hands and said:

"My boy, I have not interfered in your way otherwise than by an occasional admonition. The severest, and I hope the last, I administered to you just now. Your mode of life has not been to my liking; but I never doubted that a Van Alden will emerge from the ordeal of the follies of our modern life like precious metal, that must pass through the crucible if it shall be cleansed from the dross.

"To prove my trust in your good sense, I give at once my unqualified approval, satisfied that the pedigree of your future wife is everything that could be desired. I am happy beyond measure to know of your anticipated marriage; at the same time I am possessed of a goodly portion of natural inquisitiveness, and would like to hear more about her than the fortune you mentioned she would bring you. Money is not amiss with one of your propensities to get rid of; yet, as

you have sufficient, albeit that you are extravagant, her fortune is of little consequence to you. Now, my dear boy, you had better unfold your colors! Who is she? Of a family I know?"

"My dear uncle," replied Van Alden, "don't ride your hobby too fast. I have not, as yet, asked her, and don't know whether she will have me. She is not one of our city beauties. I met her in Morganville. I am not Romeo-like in love with her, for I have outgrown such like sentiment; yet, if I can win her, it will be worth my while trying."

"Our city girls," said the old gentleman, "are not to be spoken of slightingly. They are a fine and noble lot. Sometimes the rarest gem is found hidden in some out-of-way place, and it takes just such deuced sharp eyes as yours to find it. If she will have you? What girl would refuse a handsome fellow like yourself, and a Van Alden at that? If you want her, and you will ask her, she will say 'Yes' quick enough."

Frank now assumed a more serious mien, and said: "My coming here has a second object, of not less import to me than the first. I require your advice and your personal intervention. I hope that what I am about to say to you will not mar the pleasure my first communication gave you. I mentioned to you that I have outgrown a Romeo-like sentiment. 'T is because of a like love that I once felt for a beautiful girl in the humbler walks of life, which has proven but a transitory passion.

"Clare—that is her name—is devotedly attached to me, and has lived ever since in the belief that I will make her my wife. You are aware that this cannot be, and as I am

about to woo, I must apprise her of my perfidy. You perceive that I do not spare myself. The tie that binds me to her, if no more one of love, is one of great interest and duty toward her and child. I must deal her a blow, but will endeavor that the same leaves but a soreness which the healing balm of time can cure. As I cannot strike directly and indirectly at the same time, I ask your interposition.

Reuben Van Alden had listened at first with composure to his nephew's disclosure of an escapade, not the only one he thought him guilty of. As the latter proceeded, the old gentleman's face expressed surprise and pain. At its conclusion he rose from his seat, and with deep feeling said:

"I am grieved to know you guilty of an act that gives you cause for regret and self-reproach, and which must bring sorrow to that young woman."

"Frank," he continued, "had you deliberately beguiled that girl by false promises, and thus sought her ruin, I would never have believed you kin of mine, and would henceforth shun you as I would a leper. Thank God, yours is not such a black deed, and not the act of a libertine. Are you sure that she was honest, and that she is not more to blame than yourself? Has an honest girl of humble origin a right to listen to the love-making of a young man like yourself? The difference of station in life must have warned her of an unlikelihood for an honest union. You say you meant it honestly with your suit and made your honest intention known to her? Then she should have jealously guarded her honor, which, if assailed by passion, must destroy a welcome for her, even in the honest homes of her equals. Perhaps you erred—lovers often do. She

may have been a girl who, with her good looks and coyness, would allure a young man like yourself to a promise of marriage even, and forget how far she could go with impunity."

"You are doing her injustice," said Frank. "'T is because of the knowledge of her guilelessness that I shrink from the ordeal of revealing to her my faithlessness."

The old gentleman crossed and recrossed the library, greatly agitated, not at all pleased.

How was he to advise on a subject he deprecated the necessity of giving counsel.

"That girl," he muttered to himself, "is the victim of my nephew's youthful folly." From Frank's own confession he could give it no harsher name. She must receive reparation! What other reparation could Frank offer, than placing her in a comfortable position. She may then again become a respectable member of her society, and marry some decent fellow, who would not be the worse off for doing so.

Turning to Frank, he said: "You have asked my advice. As much as I deplore your having asked me, I will give you the only one I can give. A discarded mistress, if pinched by poverty, is easily tempted to become the mistress of number two; you must therefore act handsomely by her, and settle on her a good lump of money. Then write to her, stating that you are about to marry, and must separate from her. She will easily understand the necessity for it. You know better how to compose such a letter than I, and need no suggestion from me."

"The advice you are giving me," said Frank, "is creditable to your good heart. I have settled on her a sum suffi-

cient to keep her out of harm's way for life. We may feel prone to steel our hearts when self-interest, pride, and caste are at stake, but we ought at least endeavor to soften the pain we are obliged to inflict, if we can possibly do so. To write to her the letter you suggest would be adding insult to injury, and be the act of a coward."

"And what would you then suggest?" asked the old aristocrat.

"I must send to her my nearest kin, who, well versed with the reasons forbidding the union, must try to reconcile her to the inevitable," replied Frank.

"As I am your nearest kin," said the old gentleman, "I infer that I am to be your ambassador, deliver your bitter message and coat it with sweet diplomatic reasoning. Indeed, Frank, you must esteem that woman highly, to urge me on such a mission; otherwise, I would consider it detrimental to my self-respect to have it even proposed to me. Well, my boy, I will consider it, and let you know my final decision. I suppose I will have to act in your behalf."

CHAPTER VII.

Youth is oblivious to everything, but to the gratification of its omnipotent behest. Youthful love blazes fiercely, but its vital warmth rarely rises to the surface.

Van Alden's love had proven but a youthful passion, that had run its wild course, evaporating its intoxicating fumes with the possession of the coveted object.

Clare now inspired him with but a sympathetic concern. He could not sacrifice his whole life because of a phantom of conscience that occasionally upbraided him. His youthful folly and error, as he thought, must not entail on him, binding himself for life to a woman he does not love, and to whom, at best, he could bring no happiness.

His desire is to do what is right, but his first principle—and I fear it has equal weight with all—is self-preservation. Most men are not generous as regards the happiness of women, if their own is not enhanced thereby. We are all more or less prone to selfishness. Press our conscience to act upon fixed principles, and if they clash with our own welfare, we will tell you that we are asked to perform extremes, and will find a way out of it. Our minds are often like musical instruments, out of tune; touch a particular key and it will jar on our hearing.

Van Alden was a spoiled child of fortune. Habits fostered by wealth allowed him to gratify his tastes to the utmost, and he had acquired passions that poisoned his better self. It was for his own sake, and because of a newly

awakened passion that he concluded to sever the tie with Clare.

It was in his power to provide for her and her child handsomely. He had done so, and if he possibly could, would palliate his betrayal by a pretext of circumstances over which he had no control. For this reason he had sought his uncle, and, as we are aware, had succeeded in enlisting the latter's intervention. Elated at his success, he left the old aristocrat, feeling contented with himself and the world at large.

On the evening of Frank's contemplated visit to Morganville he received from his friend, Ralph Armitage, a letter, in which he was informed of Judge Brown's and Helen's departure for New York, where they would embark on the coming Saturday for England, by the Cunard line.

This letter changed his plans.

Helen, the incentive of his projected visit to Morganville, departs for England on Saturday, mused Van Alden. That would be tomorrow. Have they arrived in New York? Where have they alighted? He must find out. What would prevent him taking passage on that steamer, and roaming through the continent in her company? Would she object.

Hailing the first cab he met on reaching the street, he ordered the driver to bring him to the Cunard office.

Arrived there, he was informed that every available berth had been engaged.

He would then follow by the next outgoing steamer on Wednesday.

Arrived at the office of the White Star line, he secured

the last berth, and then drove to the Fifth Avenue hotel.

"The Judge and Miss Powell are guests of the house," replied the polite clerk to Van Alden's inquiries; and further stated that they were not in, and that they intended leaving on the morrow for England.

Having received this information Van Alden left.

CHAPTER VIII.

Judge Brown and Helen were seated in the sitting-room of the Northwestern Hotel, Liverpool, close to one of the windows facing Lime street, a popular thoroughfare.

Throngs of people lined the streets. Royalty had honored the city for a special occasion, and, like true Britons, the masses had turned out to give their Prince a welcome. Both the Judge and Helen watched the motley throng.

Those who had not donned their festive attire—perhaps from want of it—displayed, at least, festive proclivities by a boisterous hilarity and horseplay, induced by the ale or gin indulged in frequently at the public houses abounding in the neighborhood.

"The thousands thus assembled are left to themselves, unrestrained and untutilated by the guardians of the peace," said the Judge to Helen. "They, the people, protect themselves, conscious that the disturber of their peaceful gatherings would bring condign punishment upon himself from one of their own kind. How different you will find the gatherings of the oppressed masses, who, on like occasions, are kept in awe by a displayed force, so that they wage not war on law and order."

"Englishmen are freemen," uttered a gentleman who approached the Judge and Helen unperceived.

Both turned toward the speaker.

"How are you, Mr. Herbal?" inquired the Judge. "I am glad to meet you again."

Helen greeted the new-comer with a pleasant smile.

The Honorable C. Herbal, a fellow passenger on their trip across the Atlantic, had returned to Liverpool that morning from a visit to his home, near Wolverhampton.

He is a man in the prime of life, of true English type, with an intelligent, open countenance, in which one instinctively recognizes the noble nature. He has polished manners, and is a m of the world. He has traveled extensively, and had passed through the States on his return from the Antipodes.

"Yes, Judge," resumed Herbal, "Englishmen are freemen, only the freedom brings with it habits and tastes destructive to the moral well-being of the masses, launching them into poverty, degradation and crime. This is your first visit to England, Miss Powell, if I am not mistaken? Travel affords the observant mind glimpses into the index of nations and individuals. I have no doubt you take an interest in that line of study. You will meet with unaccustomed sights wherever you travel through this realm, and your attention will be forcibly drawn to a disease that gnaws on the vitals, strength and prosperity of the masses. 'T is drink! This throng of merry-makers, the majority are in drink. It is their diversity after daily toil. They are habitues of public houses, wherein they squander their hard-earned wages.

"Notice that emaciated, ragged woman leading that staggering man. May be he is her husband. Very likely she hunted him up, and now leads him home that she may save the few pennies, if he has any left, to buy some food for herself and famishing children. To what a home, judging

from her appearance, does she lead him? When that man awakens from his drunken stupor, will he content himself in that miserable hovel? No! If he finds his pockets empty, surmising that his wife had rifled them, he will urge her to share with him at least half of what she found in them. If she refuses, he will abuse her; endeavor to force her into compliance by beating her; and, if such brutal treatment fails, he will go forth to get drink on credit.

"Rarely that the wife rebels against such treatment and neglect, unless she cares to send her husband to prison for weeks or months and march herself and children into the workhouse. They can be fed there. 'T is not the bread alone she cares for, but where she can eat it, and that she need not be dependent for it on task-masters—hard-hearted ones at that. She would rather suffer, half starve herself and children, than go to the workhouse. The end of that woman's story? She died from ill-usage, starvation, despair; or, like her husband, through drink.

"No, Miss Powell," Herbal continued, "I do not exaggerate, but rather palliate facts. Look at that couple there! Both are staggering from drink; and there! that wretched pair encircling each other! Now, their besotted lips meet!"

"Shame! shame!" uttered Helen; "you are right, Mr. Herbal; shame on the liberty that fosters such indecency!"

"I am sorry, Miss Powell," said Herbal, "if I attracted your attention to sights that engendered your disgust. In journeying through the British Isles you will not be able to close your eyes to them, else you will have to keep them closed too often."

"I frequently read descriptions of viciousness," said

Helen, "but I thought it shuns honest eyes, and lurks in dark and out-of-way places only. Is it possible that my sex, be she even of the humbler spheres and walks of life, can demonstrate such an abandon to shame before the gaze of thousands! And it is a queen, a mother, pious and virtuous who reigns here!"

"Our Queen," said Herbal, "cannot wield the wand at will. Englishmen are loyal subjects to their Queen, from tradition and custom, which they will remain so long as Her Majesty contents herself to be the executor of their will; but no more. We have a government, as you are undoubtedly aware, of parties, of responsible ministers to Parliament, whose members are elected by the franchises of the people. Such a government may propose laws that will enlarge individual freedom. If it attempts to pass measures enforcing sobriety, defining immoral habits, customs which the law has sanctioned or winked at for centuries, it would wreck its power against the stubborn resistance of a Parliament that cannot become a party thereto, if it does not want to be swept from existence. Besides, law cannot change incarnate habits and tastes of people who have no hope in life, and seek forgetfulness of their condition in the cup that beckons to them from every corner; and thus they must propagate their species."

"What could remedy this evil?" inquired the Judge.

"Society," replied Herbal, "if we had one willing to grasp the needful remedies for the existing state of things. The Church fails with the masses, because of its mistaken methods, and weans but few from their downward career."

"I cannot divine the drift of what you say," said Helen.

"Is not the Church the largest and best constituted body of society?"

"No," replied Herbal; "the Church is a doctrinal body that endeavors to absorb society. Its method is one of reasoning only, but of little help. It promises a hereafter, only that the struggling, wretched masses cannot appreciate such consolation. They believe themselves entitled to a small share of the goodies and enjoyments in this vale of plenty to others, in which the Church enjoys a liberal share. Doctrines—that the Almighty gave them life with the prescript that they must but toil, live in want, in pious abnegation from all that brightens and cheers the eyes and senses, that they may deserve the Kingdom of Heaven—do not suit our present age. Such doctrines of the Church are the prime cause of its waning power over thinking mankind."

"You say that society is not willing to grasp the needs that could remedy the evil, and that the Church, through a mistaken method, wins but few proselytes, and that it is impossible to check it by law. How, then, remedy the evil?" inquired the Judge.

"One of the three factors alone can accomplish but little," replied Herbal. "Let them act conjointly, and they will accomplish much."

"You arouse my curiosity—indeed you do! I would like to acquaint myself with your ideas," said the Judge.

Herbal gazed wistfully at Helen and said: "I am now engaged writing a volume on that subject, and will forward to you a copy in due time."

"Let me congratulate you, Mr. Herbal, on your becoming an author on social questions which shall benefit mankind.

I hope that you advocate for us women an advanced sphere," said Helen, with a smile.

"I must confess that I am not inclined to advocate a broader sphere for your sex than you already occupy. I would rather have you retrace somewhat your steps," replied Herbal, pleasantly.

"Terrible men that you are! Trace our steps backward? Why, everything advances now—even the time for our contemplated visit. No friend of our sex would suggest such a thing. I really thought that you cared for us—at least a little. How mistaken I have been in my judgment of you," said Helen in a tone of raillery.

Helen knew why Herbal had declined the Judge's invitation to argue the remedies the country were in need of. With the Judge's assent, she had accepted Lady Darvey's (Herbal's sister) invitation. The hour for the contemplated visit had arrived, and the Judge was now reminded of the fact.

"I must tell Mrs. Betts," said Helen, "that she need not wait for our return to luncheon." Turning to Herbal, "You will excuse my leaving you for a moment."

"On condition that your errand is not a device to improve toilet and looks," said Herbal, with a pleasant smile.

"How you divined my intentions!" said Helen. "And why would you not have me improve my looks? No! no! Please do not answer. I withdraw the question."

Herbal looked at her with kindly interest and admiration. How sorry he felt that he had passed the meridian of life. He might have been a pleasant traveling companion, but he could be no more to her.

"I have not construed your question in the sense you feared," he said. "I have classed you higher than you thought I did, and perhaps thought me able."

Helen gazed at Herbal furtively. She felt that she had made a mistake.

"How well-bred that Englishman is," thought she.

CHAPTER IX.

Reuben Van Alden felt out of sorts; dissatisfied and sorry that he had promised his nephew to meddle in his love affair, and in such a way as that. He felt nervous and agitated at the thought that he must pay that young woman a visit. He had no particular dislike for young women. No! He thought very much of them; would look at their pretty faces, slightly squeeze their hands, if held out to him—naturally in all fairness to propriety. Their sunny faces recalled to him the one of his never-forgotten Mary.

Poor Mary! She had left him a solitary widower, their union not being blessed with children. He mourned her truly—yes, he did? He must bear the burden of the many years of life he hoped he would yet live with resignation, and he would, by further good deeds, qualify himself for the eternal life by the side of her who, the worthier of both, had preceded him into the Kingdom of Heaven. He had everything he wished for, but felt solitary. He loved Frank as he would have loved a son; therefore the knowledge that his nephew intended bringing to his own solitary home a wife, brought his heart infinite joy. Yes! he must make the sacrifice and see that young woman.

"Let me see"—taking a card his nephew had given him, he read: "Mrs. Gray, Gray's Villa, N."

"I understand! Frank bought that home, and he is known there as Mr. Gray.

"I wonder what sort of a woman she is? I will soon find

out. I hope she is not of the milky kind, so easily imposed on, but all feeling and sentiment, and not at all practical. This is Tuesday; tomorrow I must see Frank off. I had better go and see her on Thursday morning."

Van Alden, Sr., on Thursday took the boat for N.

He was seated on the upper deck musing and rehearsing in mind the needful arguments by which he must succeed in his ambassadorial mission. He would not speak harshly to her. No! Yet he must impress upon her mind how fortunate she is that her lover is a Van Alden—a generous, noble-minded fellow, and that she should consider what her fate might have been had she lent herself for an unholy love to some unprincipled fellow of her class.

"Next stopping-place, N!" shouted a voice.

The old aristocrat arose from his seat, saying: "Yes, that place yonder must be N."

That place was not the Mecca of his choice, but it was his destination for this day, and he felt pleased that he would soon leave the boat, a conveyance he had no particular penchant for.

At last the boat reached N.

Close to Van Alden, Sr., several passengers awaited disembarkation.

"Would you kindly direct me to Villa Gray?" said Van Alden, addressing a Quaker-like looking gentleman.

"If you follow my way, I will bring you to a footpath leading to the cottage.

"There, sir, that cottage to the right is Villa Gray."

With "thanks" and a "good morning," the old aristocrat took the pathway indicated by the Quaker.

The shade the old gentleman carried protected him from the sun's burning rays; nevertheless he felt glad on reaching the cottage gate.

A lad working in the garden opened the gate.

"Is Miss Gray at home?" inquired the old gentleman.

"No, sir! Mrs. Gray and child both are out, but Mr. Gray is in."

The old gentleman, looking at the lad in astonishment, said: "Do I hear right, my lad? Mr. Gray is in, you say?"

"Yes, sir!" answered the lad.

Frank left yesterday for Liverpool; I, myself, witnessed his departure, mused the old gentleman, greatly perturbed. A thought suddenly flashed through his mind. Turning to the lad, he asked, with a smile, "How many Mr. Gray's has Mrs. Gray?"

"Well, sir," replied the lad, "you surely ask a funny question. Since I live here, and this is goin' on for three years, I knows only one Mr. Gray here; he is the old gentleman. He has no brothers I knows of."

"The old gentleman? What old gentleman?" asked Van Alden, Sr., with still greater surprise depicted on his countenance.

"The old gentleman—that is the father of Mrs. Gray," retorted the lad, astonished at the ignorance of city folks.

Van Alden had, in the meantime, entered the garden. Matters appeared to him complicated. "She has a father, and he lives here?" queried the old gentleman. "Frank never mentioned this to me. What a wretch that man must be to live on the sin and shame of his child. I judged her rightly! She cannot succeed in throwing dust into

the eyes of the old man, even if she succeeded in doing so with the young one. I don't believe in her guilelessness. How much easier now will I arrange the matter that brought me here. No compunction—no, indeed, none!" Addressing the lad, he said:

"Inform Mr. Gray that I desire to speak to him."

"Follow me, sir, and I will bring you to him," said the lad.

Van Alden followed his guide to an arbor, where the blind artist was seated.

"A gentleman wishes to speak to you, Master Gray," announced the lad, and withdrew.

The blind artist rose from his seat in polite recognition of his visitor, saying: "Whom have I the pleasure of addressing, and of what service can I be to you, sir?"

Van Alden looked in surprise and with visible emotion at the blind, stately-looking man, saying: "Be seated, Mr. Gray, and, if you permit, I will do likewise. My name, no doubt, is a familiar one to you. 'T is strange that Frank never mentioned you to me."

The blind artist, greatly agitated on hearing Frank's name, asked: "Do you allude to Frank Van Alden? Who are you, sir, that you utter his name in such a familiar way?"

"Be seated—please be seated, Mr. Gray; do not excite yourself. I am Frank's uncle, and came here on an errand in his behalf."

"At last! at last!" muttered the blind artist. "Be welcome, Mr. Van Alden, thrice welcome to this, our home. I feel sorry—indeed, very sorry—that dear Clare and the

babe are not at home. I always call the dear child, babe," continued the blind artist. "I remember its birth, but could not see its growth. Both are visiting friends in the village. I will send for them at once."

"No, not now," said Van Alden. "Later you may, should you still desire it. I wish to speak to you first. I think it by far better that we two should first come to a proper understanding; then you may decide if I need speak to your daughter."

"You rather surprise me, sir," said the blind artist. "First you wish to speak to me, and then I shall decide if you need speak to my daughter! I must say you speak in riddles. You would not have come to see me, of whose existence, as you told me, you knew naught—and, because you found the father, you think it of no consequence to see her whom you came to meet, and who, as you must be aware, is no stranger to you."

"Frank acquainted me with the fact of his and your daughter's relationship," said Van Alden. "The mission that brought me here, I undertook at Frank's earnest request. My nephew would not entrust the same to others. Having met you, my task is somewhat easier. I prefer arranging business matters with men. However, before I proceed, I would fain ask you a question: "Have you, all these years, been aware of their relationship?"

"Certainly," replied the blind artist.

"You say 'yes!' How long since that you have lost your eyesight?" inquired Van Alden.

"Six years ago," answered the blind artist.

"I will understand matters clearer," said Van Alden, "if

you answer one more question. Were you needy at the time your eyesight failed you?"

The blind artist turned his now pallid face towards the direction of the speaker, and, with a voice that vibrated with indignation, replied; "I divine the reason of this, your last question, and can proudly answer that I and my child were dependent on no one for our living."

Van Alden shook his head in astonishment. Angered at the defiant answer the blind artist gave, he said: "And yet you sanctioned your daughter's liaison with my nephew! 'T is an act that discredits the name of father. The knowledge of it closes my heart to the sympathetic throb your affliction had nigh stirred within it!"

"Liaison! liaison! What liaison do you mean? Speak out, man! No more riddles! Guilty of an act that discredits my name of father? What act is it that discredits that name? Oh! I understand you," he continued. "I see it now. Yes, I was derelict in my duty to my child. I ought not to have permitted these many years of secrecy.

"You see, sir, I love her so much that I dote on her slightest wish. For this reason I acquiesced to her entreaties. 'T is for Frank's interest and welfare she had pleaded. Be assured, sir, it smote my heart to know that the protection of her husband was denied to her. Yes, you are right. As her father, I had no right permitting her to subject herself to a suspicion. Oh, terrible!" he exclaimed. "Blind here and blind there," pointing to his eyes and forehead as he sank with a groan into his chair.

Van Alden stood motionless—bewildered. "Her husband—secret marriage," he muttered to himself. "What

does all this mean? Frank is not married! No! Does that man play a part? For what purpose?"

At last he said: "You spoke of your daughter's husband; her secret marriage. Your daughter—is she married?"

"You told me, sir," said the artist, "that Frank sent you here on an errand in his behalf. With what errand could he have entrusted you, unless he informed you that my daughter is his lawful wife?"

Van Alden's face turned ashy white. He had done that man an injustice in his thoughts. Is it possible that his nephew had contrived such a deception? Impossible! Frank is no villain! Preposterous to cast such a suspicion on him? 'T is she! To veil her frailty, she has deceived her father. Yes, 't is she!

These were the thoughts that flashed across his harassed mind. He understood it all. He now felt a compunction to acquaint that poor, deluded man with the true state of affairs; but his feeling heart must not deter him from a duty—more paramount now—to sever the last link that bound his nephew to such an abandoned woman. Yes, he must speak.

"My errand, Mr. Gray," said he, "is to inform your daughter that Frank can no longer continue a relationship into which he had unfortunately entered with her, which is not one of a lawful, honest union, as you seem to believe."

"'T is a lie!" vociferated the blind artist, his whole frame trembling with agitation. "An infamous lie! Don't you see that I am blind?" clenching his hands as he spoke. "Not a lawful union, you say? I understand you now. You believe my daughter to be the mistress of your nephew,

and that I, her father, winked at her shame and lived on the proceeds of her sin! Art thou a father? hast thou ever been a father? No, no! else thou wouldst not have uttered such hell-bred thoughts! My daughter the mistress of your nephew," he continued; "the child an offspring of sin? Thou darest breathe this even, and I am powerless to close your slanderous mouth!"

The blind artist suddenly turned his face toward the direction from whence he heard familiar footsteps approaching.

"Hush! I hear her footsteps. I am here; come this way, Clare!" he shouted. "Thank God that she is coming." Addressing Van Alden, he said: "Ask her, look at her, and then ask yourself if her like would become venal even for a crown."

Clare, on entering the garden and hearing her father's angry voice, hurried toward the arbor, when her ear caught his last sentence.

She instinctively divined all.

Spectre-like she stood for a moment, and, unnerved, sank to the ground.

CHAPTER X.

Helen and the Judge had accepted Lord and Lady Darvey's invitation, tendered through Herbal.

"My sister's house," the latter had said, "is the rendezvous of many of your countrymen. Lady Darvey is Lord Darvey's second wife. His first wife belonged to a well-known family in New York. Both take special interest in your compatriots. I spoke to them of you; that you intend remaining in Liverpool. They at once urged me to afford them the pleasure of an introduction to you. My sister is somewhat indisposed, at present, but Lord Darvey will call on you. You will like my sister, Miss Powell. She is neither a handsome nor a brilliant woman, but is, as we say—between and betwixt—a slight combination of both. My sister will be delighted to meet you. I am pleased that you kindly consented to call on her."

Turning to the Judge, he continued: "If you are fond of sport, you will find my brother-in-law a capital shot and an expert with the fishing rod. 'T is agreed then, on Thursday for luncheon. It will be an informal affair, *en famille* Be ready by noon."

The carriage Lord Darvey had sent for the Judge and Helen came to a stop before a stately mansion.

Herbal quickly alighted to assist Helen.

At the entrance two sprightly girls, about fourteen years of age, received them with smiling faces, expressing their pleasure at the meeting.

Vic., one of the sisters, who seemed to be the spokesman, said: "Dear mamma awaits you in her room."

Then each of the twins, taking Helen's hand, ascended a handsome broad stairway toward a room, the door of which a servant held ajar, and in which Lady Darvey received them.

Herbal, who followed, introduced both to his sister.

Lady Darvey endeavored to rise.

Helen, observing the effort it cost her, begged her to desist.

"I feel sorry," said the hostess, "that I could not bid you welcome on the threshold of our home. I hope that my deputies," looking at the twins, "acquitted themselves well of the honor the occasion bestowed upon them."

"They did that," said Herbal, "I bear witness to that effect, and will further state that they demonstrated a cordiality such as I missed for myself. Fancy, dear sister," he continued, "they took possession of Miss Powell's hands, almost dragging her upstairs, in their eagerness to bring to you their American cousin."

Turning to Helen with a pleasant smile, he asked: "Have their large, brawny English hands squeezed yours hard, Miss Powell?"

"You shall not make us hide our big hands, uncle!" retorted Vic., mischievously. "If we could not help admiring the Miss Powell of your description, how can you blame us falling downright in love with the real Miss Powell before us?"

Both girls again took hold of Helen's hands, and, gazing into her face, Vic. asked: "Do you like us, Miss Powell?"

"Yes!"

"Did you hear that, uncle? The lady likes us, and far better than she likes you. Try and see if Miss Powell will permit your big hands to rest in hers! There, you naughty uncle; you have got your deserts now, and you will not so soon criticise our hands again."

Helen's face was covered with crimson; but, self-possessed, she smiled at Herbal and said:

"This is the outcome of firing the imagination of the young; they must then naturally become so predisposed toward the object or subject that the illusion tricks them into an hallucination."

Then, turning to the girls, she said: "I am pleased to hear that you like me, and assure you that I reciprocate the sentiment."

Herbal now turned to the twins: "You naughty vixens, shame on you to expose your uncle's hands, after having tried so hard to squeeze them into a No. 12 glove," he said, laughingly.

Presently, Herbal proposed to the Judge that they pay a visit to the stables and kennels.

Lady Darvey dismissed the twins, she and Helen remaining the sole occupants of the room.

Lady Darvey had no claim to beauty. Her eyes of a heavenly blue, like Helen's, were mild, yet full of expression. Her face was invariably lit up by a smile, irresistible in its charm; a stately and graceful figure; these were her outer advantages. A well-informed mind, a heart sympathetic to the touch of mankind, were her inner, her greater charms.

Helen had cast a furtive glance around the room, and then met the eyes of her hostess.

"This my private sitting room," said Lady Darvey; "my sanctuary, as I call it, into which I permit no one to penetrate but my immediate family. From the description my brother gave me of you, I felt a strong desire to meet you. Not able to leave this room, I received you here. I am glad because of it. I like your face, Miss Powell," she continued, "and I am sure that I will like you even more, for your own self. I hope you will be able to reciprocate the feeling, and that we may become friends." Saying these last words, she held out her hands to Helen.

Helen replied with warmth: "Indeed, Lady Darvey, you tempt me much to take you at your word. I only fear that your predisposition for a stranger, because of Mr. Herbal's kindly overdrawn and flattering opinion has placed me before you upon a higher plane than I may be able to maintain."

"Modesty itself, Miss Powell, suffices to keep my friendship, for it outweighs many other shortcomings. I honestly meant what I have said," continued Lady Darvey, "and to prove it, I 'll take the liberty and call you Helen—provided you grant me the privilege. If you do, I will insist that you call me 'Bella.' My name is Isabella. I like the shorter name better."

"In the language of sunny Italy, Bella means handsome. You can now divine why I like the name Bella. My husband thus always calls me handsome. Even if he does not think me so now, he may do so from custom later," said Lady Darvey, with a charming smile. Continuing, she asked; "Do you admire this room? Yes? But it is not what you expected. The sewing-machine is disenchanting.

Please tell me, do they in your country think us women here an indolent, pleasure-seeking lot? From descriptions they must believe us a gay set, with no other thought but that of pleasure. I hope they are made aware that we are reforming now, that we belong to needle women societies, temperance, and all sorts of charitable organizations to help ameliorate the condition of our poor. Formerly we contributed a few pounds to charity, but otherwise took but little interest in them. We even have organized dress reform, and all sorts of retrenchments from extravagance. Have we not turned, as the saying goes, from the ridiculous to the sublime?"

"Do you do your own sewing?" asked Helen archly, looking at the sewing machine.

"No," replied Lady Darvey, with a smile, "I will confide in you that I do not run that vulgar thing myself; I employ a substitute, who makes all the wearing apparel I desire to present to the ragged-school society. It flatters me to impress these trades-ladies that I am working for the poor. It is so condescending, so amiable; and the newspapers reporting Lady Darvey here, Lady Darvey there. Is not this sublime? I don't know how long the craze will last; I suppose until it wears off; but so long as it does last, I must be in the fashion, you know!"

The speaker had tried to be serious, but Helen easily detected her raillery.

"My dear Lady Darvey—oh, no! my dear Bella, I meant to say," said Helen, with a smile. "It is a pity that you ladies turned sublime. The sooner you return to your former state of society, and to its extravagant pleasures, the

better it will be for mankind in general. If you persist in remaining sublime, you will soon increase the numbers depending on your charity. Before I left home," continued Helen, "I kept Mrs. Ryan, my dressmaker, and her girls busy for nearly two months. After she had completed my work, some other foolish woman, like myself, gave her more. It meant a living for them. But for the work, Mrs. Ryan and the girls might have lived in want, or on charity. I had made up my mind to start on my tour with my wardrobe complete and made at home. Mrs. Ryan suited my taste, and that was all I wanted. Should I find that I am not altogether in fashion here, I will get a few more dresses. As much patriotism as I have to patronize our own trades and working people, I feel not amiss to leave some of my surplus means amongst those whose hospitality I enjoy. The follies of the rich and well-to-do people, help the toiling masses by far more than their charity could. We are ready to spend thousands for pleasure and even whims, without flinching at the amount; how much of these thousands would we part with for charity?"

"What a peep into humanity at your age!" exclaimed Lady Darvey. "I will give your thoughts expression amongst my set. Such lucid reasoning that yours is must justify our returning to a life so delightful to us and so beneficial to mankind."

"What is beneficial to mankind?" inquired the voice of a gentleman who had suddenly entered the room—who, after bowing politely to Helen, kissed Lady Darvey affectionately on her cheeks.

"How you startled me, Fred! Husbands have no con-

sideration for their wives' nerves," said Lady Darvey to Helen. "If ever you marry, have your betrothed sign beforehand an agreement to the effect that he will never enter your room unless he first knocks at your door."

"I have some friends," said Helen, archly, "who call on me frequently. I told them to dispense with that formality, for I thought that they may feel more like visiting a friend."

"Thanks, Miss Powell, for taking the weaker part," said Lord Darvey. "But for you my dear wife might have coerced me to sign the agreement she just now spoke of, even after eight years of married life."

"How well you look, Miss Powell," Lord Darvey continued. "You will take immensely! Now, don't blush; I know that you ladies consult the looking-glass daily; it must tell you the same tale—only without sound; therefore nature appointed us its mouthpiece."

"My Lord," said Lady Darvey, "I am surprised! Where did you hear such a nice little speech? You must have committed it to memory for this occasion, for never since I have known you, have you said half so nice a thing in my presence."

"Does she not look the most unhappy woman on account of it! What a brute I must be," said Lord Darvey, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "I must inform you," he continued, "that I am the bearer of a surprise to you. I met a friend of ours—a compatriot of your's, Miss Powell. The gentleman arrived this morning in our city. Guess who he is."

"You know, Fred, that I am poor at guessing; besides,

we have so many friends in the States. Tell me all about him. There, dear, don't keep me in suspense."

"After the inaugural service I ordered the coachman to stop at the Northwestern. I intended inquiring if Judge Brown and you, Miss Powell, had left for our house. In the vestibule I met Frank Van Alden. You may imagine my surprise. I insisted on his coming with me, but could only exact his promise to come to luncheon. He looks remarkably well," he continued; "eight years' time has changed the handsome youth to a fine-looking man."

"This is indeed a surprise," exclaimed Lady Darvey.

Addressing Helen, she asked: "Do you know the Van-Aldens of New York? They are distant relatives of Lord Darvey by his former marriage."

"I met a gentleman by that name in my native place He visited some friends there. The gentleman is the only one by that name I know," replied Helen.

A slight tint had overspread Helen's face, on hearing the name Van Alden. By the time Lady Darvey inquired if she knew a gentleman by that name, no trace of it was visible.

Why it had appeared, who can tell! The solution of this must be left to the fair readers, who, in their social life have met a fascinating, handsome man, paying them marked attentions, who suddenly vanishes from their horizon, to reappear again unexpectedly.

CHAPTER XI.

Ever since Frank Van Alden had left Morganville, he could not efface Helen's lovely image from his memory. She subjected his thoughts entirely, and when about to seek her in her home, he had heard that she had left for other climes and countries, to return, perhaps, lost to him forever, he resolved to follow her, find her, and if possible win her for himself.

Did he love? Had he not loved Clare with an undying devotion, as he had thought, and proved wanting in it?

Are men capable of love to the full extent of their capacity before they approach the sense of dignified maturity? Had he now reached that maturity? The silken cords that fetter him to a life for which the gods themselves could have envied him, does he intend to rend them asunder for love? Who knows, who can fathom the human soul?

We are aware of Van Alden's arrival in Liverpool and that he had declined to accompany Lord Darvey. He had intended making inquiries concerning the arrival of the Judge and Helen, and ascertain where they had alighted.

The clerk at the Northwestern informed him that the party were the guests of the house—not in at present, on a visit to Lady Darvey.

What a coincidence, thought Van Alden; so full of good omens for him. How came they on visiting terms there? 'T is strange that Lord Darvey never mentioned them. Miss Powell—will she be surprised to meet him? Shall he

let her surmise the truth? She would divine it, if he chose that she should. Her demeanor would then manifest any propensity she may feel for him. Thus soliloquized he.

He well knew that Helen was not a girl who would be smitten with even a handsome man on short notice; but he thought that their social *tete-a-tetes* in Morganville had somewhat prepossessed her in his favor, and is she not, woman-like, susceptible to the batteries plied by a skillful gunner?

Our hero was not vain—men never are—only conscious of the attributes nature and education had favored him with. Besides, the gentler sex never failed to remind him of it.

On entering Lord Darvey's mansion, Van Alden was met by a servant who had received orders to usher the newcomer into Lady Darvey's presence.

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Van Alden," said Lady Darvey, holding her hand out to him, which he carried politely to his lips. "You must pardon my not rising to receive you. The delicate state, if not of my health, at least of a sprained ankle—very painful, prevents it. It is quite flattering to us to be the recipients of your visit, having only arrived this morning."

"I am grateful for the welcome you so kindly express," said Van Alden. "I, myself, feel delighted to meet you again. The pain you speak of finds no reflection in your countenance, which is all sunshine."

"I am aware of the rapid progress you people in the States have made. It would seem that you are no laggards in the admirable art of flattery. I know of old that you are not prone to render yourself guilty of downright flattery;

therefore the compliment you paid me is acceptable, and is enhanced by the knowledge that you are competent authority in such matters," said Lady Darvey, with a bewitching smile.

"Apropos," the lady continued; "we have some guests. Judge Brown and his niece, Miss Powell. Lord Darvey is at present escorting them through the grounds. I believe you met them in their native place, whilst visiting there. Miss Powell spoke of it."

"Yes; I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Powell and the Judge in Morganville," replied Van Alden.

"My brother Herbal had the pleasure of being a fellow passenger of theirs. To him we are indebted for the pleasure of meeting them for the first time today. Miss Powell is a lovely being! The handsomest girl I have met since I remember. So well bred—so natural. You are aware," Lady Darvey continued, "that I meet many of your countrymen. I find amongst them many very handsome ones; some of the handsomest; distinguished looking; with polished manners, and well informed; only somewhat artificial and superficial. Where has Miss Powell been brought up, and who coached her into such lovely womanhood? I am informed that the lady was left an orphan at a tender age. My brother is all enthusiasm about her. 'Tis a pity that he is past an age to inspire a young girl with a fancy. How strange that you gentlemen in the States permitted such a jewel of a woman to escape you. Miss Powell will take immensely, as my husband expresses it. She will turn the heads of our marriageable dukes, at least, and win for herself a ducal crown. You are undoubtedly

aware that your countrywomen are keen and successful competitors in our matrimonial market," added Lady Darvey, with a smile.

Ere Van Alden could reply voices were heard approaching. Helen, followed by Herbal, the Judge, and Lord Darvey entered the room.

Van Alden noticed the rising color in Helen's lovely face. Pressing her shapely hand held out to him, with warmth, he told her how well pleased he felt to meet her again.

Helen replied in similar terms.

After exchanging courtesies with the Judge and Herbal, Van Alden again approached Helen, saying, "I anticipated meeting you in England, but never dreamt that I should have that pleasure on the day of my arrival."

"You were then informed of our having left the States?" inquired Helen, without indicating surprise. "Our resolution to travel came suddenly; I had expressed a desire to go abroad, and my dear uncle thought best to undertake the journey at once; his good health permitting him to become my cicerone, as he named himself. Mr. Herbal gained us over for a short stay in this city. The inducement the gentleman held out to us was the introduction to our host and hostess (looking pleasantly at both). You must thank Mr. Herbal for meeting us so unexpectedly, which, as you kindly expressed, gives you pleasure."

Helen had said this with a look of indiscribable charm.

Lady Darvey gazed at Helen's animated, lovely countenance, and thought that the ducal crown would have to yield to that handsome, Apollo-like man, be he only a citizen of the States.

CHAPTER XII.

The blind artist had heard his child's cry of agony, and the thud of her body as it struck the ground. Rushing in wild dismay toward the spot from whence the sound had come, he raised her, and shrieked in a heart rendering voice: "You have killed my child! You have killed my darling child! Touch not her body, for your touch would be pollution.

"You came here with vile thoughts, with the prejudice of your caste. You entered this house, convinced my child to be venal; that she had allured your nephew. You came as his envoy to barter for his release from a disgraceful connection. Finding her father, you believed him guilty of connivance and living on the proceeds of her sin. The thought that she may have been the innocent victim of a vile man's art could not have entered a mind like yours. We are not the equals of your proud purse; therefore, you believed us ignominious, unworthy to be heard, before condemning; a right no honorable man, be he even of exalted station in life, would deny to the humblest of his fellow beings. Your message has killed her.

"Rejoice at your work, for your nephew is now free without the ransom you intended offering, which leaves your purse intact. Go hence, and take with you the curse of her blind, now altogether helpless father. Vengeance will overtake you and yours, as pitiless as you have shown yourself to us."

On Reuben Van Alden's face a deathly hue had spread; motionless and speechless he stood, listening with awe to the bitter words the blind father hissed into his ears; each of them cutting deeply into his heart and soul. He could not reply; could not attempt to palliate what the blind artist had accused him of. 'T was a mistake! He had made himself guilty of a wrong against them both. He could not right it with words and must go hence; but before he went, he would see that the unfortunate girl, who had only fainted, received succor.

The servants had carried Clare to her room. The doctor, who lived but a short distance from the cottage, being summoned, declared that a sudden shock had caused Clare's fainting; that she would soon recover; only that he apprehends a serious illness.

Reuben Van Alden had waited for the doctor's return from the cottage, to inquire about the condition of the patient.

The doctor spoke of the fears he entertained.

"My dear sir," said Van Alden, "you must spare no pains nor cost to insure her recovery, if possible. If need be, my own physician, Professor Langly, will assist you. I will deem it a great favor if you will keep me informed of Mrs. Gray's condition. Here is my card."

Dr. Wilmot read the name (a familiar one by hearsay), and said: "On your arrival in New York send at once for Professor Langly, for I apprehend the worst. I will inform you frequently of the progress the malady makes."

Reuben Van Alden returned to New York with the first outgoing boat.

Clare, from a vague fear of having lost Frank's love, had suffered untold agony of mind and heart this long time. The positive knowledge of her disgrace, and that her father had learned of the deception practiced on him, unstrung her mind.

Dr. Wilmot's fears were only too well founded.

Professor Langly arrived the following day.

Reuben Van Alden had informed the Professor of the probable cause of her malady.

"'Tis a serious case," remarked the Professor to Dr. Wilmot, as he gave the needful instructions for the remedies he thought best to administer; and then addressing the blind artist, said: "Your daughter is seriously ill. Her recovery depends on the vigor of youth to battle against the onslaught the malady will make on her. We must avoid everything that may tend to excite and alarm the patient. You will therefore comprehend my enjoining you and your grand-child (that had better be left with friends) from entering this room after you now leave it. It is a hardship that I now impose on you, but you will acquiesce to my injunction, because of a life that is dear to you. I will send a nurse for whose faithful attention I can vouch. I will call again, if Dr. Wilmot sends me word." Pressing the blind artist's hand and bidding him be of good cheer, the Professor left.

CHAPTER XIII.

Clare's illness engrossed her father's thoughts to the exclusion of all others.

Days and nights he kept vigil in the adjoining room.

The nurse would occasionally enter to cheer his heart with a faint hope.

Dr. Wilmot had sent a message for Professor Langly to come at once.

On his arrival and entrance into the sick chamber, he perceived the patient's alarming condition. "Send immediately for Dr. Wilmot," he said to the nurse. "I will remain in the room until you have despatched the messenger."

The Professor felt the patient's pulse, counted its wild strokes, and gazed pityingly on the young face; lovely even on the brink of eternity.

The nurse returning, he entered the adjoining room, occupied by her father.

"Good morning, Mr. Gray," he said, grasping the hand held out to him.

"How is my child today, Doctor?" the blind artist inquired. "Is there hope? I beseech you tell me, for the suspense is killing."

"This day," said the Professor, "will decide all. Let us hope for the best, and be prepared for the worst. If earthly skill proves unavailing, He, enthroned above, may ablaze with a breath the smouldering flame of life."

The blind artist, who had listened to the solemn words of

the Professor, felt the last ray of hope leaving him. In the agony of grief he shrieked, "My poor, poor child!"

"My friend," said the Professor, deeply moved, "what can I say to comfort you in this dire moment of your grief?"

"Bring me to her side, bring me to her," uttered he, rising to his feet, and stepping toward the door separating him from the death chamber of his child.

"Be calm, I beg of you be calm," said the Professor. "Were you to enter in your paroxysm of grief, you would destroy the only chance by which nature may snatch her life from the very jaws of death. You may enter her room," he continued, "but utter not a word." He then led the grief-stricken father to the bedside, before which the latter knelt in silent prayer.

"It is I who killed her," he murmured; "for I wished her dead, rather than live a life of shame. The Almighty took me at my word. Life to me will be henceforth but a barren wilderness."

"Father, dear father," whispered Clare in her delirium. "I loved him—oh! how I loved him!—and-and-I awoke in his embrace dishonored. He could not make me his wife then, he had said, but would later. The later never came. No—it never came!"

"'Tis he," she continued, raving, "who counseled the deception. I consented, else break poor father's heart. Now mine and his are broken."

"Where is my child? where is my darling?" she continued. "Oh—here it is—kiss me darling—kiss your mamma? Here—granny—take her—go, Flora, go to

grandpa; he will bless you for tonight. Watch over her, dear father, so she remains spotless and pure, and not, like —oh! how this kills! Yes! It kills!"

Doctor Wilmot had entered the room, exchanging a knowing look with Professor Langley. Addressing the blind artist, he said: "A gentleman sends you this card; he is waiting for a message. His name is Martini."

The blind artist, hearing the name, rose with surprising agility to his feet, and turning toward the voice that had uttered Martini's name, he said: "Bring me to him at once; he must not enter this room, at least not now."

CHAPTER XIV.

In the sitting room below, on the sofa, sat a gentleman gazing expectantly at the door. He is a man about thirty-five years of age, of medium height, with a bronzed face, dark piercing eyes, high forehead; with an air denoting a gentleman of refinement, of an intellectual mind and cultivated tastes. His was not a handsome face, but pleasing withal. Just now it would touch the beholder with a feeling of sympathy, for it spoke of a hidden grief.

Martini, after landing in New York and transacting the business requiring his immediate attention, took the boat for N—, to meet there his dear old friend and her—who, although lost to him, had never failed to fill his soul. Now a wife and mother, he thought he could meet her and gaze once more on her dear face with calmness and resignation.

On the foot-path leading to the cottage he had met Dr. Wilmot, from whose lips he learned of Claire's dangerous, nigh hopeless, condition.

On the entrance of the blind artist, Martini gazed at him with indescribable emotion. Approaching, he clasped him to his heart, saying: "Thus we meet again, my poor, dear friend!"

The blind artist sobbed convulsively as his head rested on the shoulder of the sculptor. "Alas, my friend, I must give her up! Yes, I must give her up!" he murmured.

The doctor had silently withdrawn.

The half hour in which the sculptor had listened to his friend's sad narrative wrought a great change in his looks.

Martini's face had changed to a livid hue; his quivering lips muttered silent maledictions upon Clare's betrayer. Is it possible? Clare, whom he would never have sullied even in thought, he found tainted by one into whose care he had resigned her implicitly; whose love for her he had never doubted, and whose honor he had thought beyond suspicion. Oh! it is terrible to believe all that he had just heard.

Both friends had entered the death chamber.

The dying girl's tresses had been clipped, giving her face a childlike appearance. She stirred restlessly about; her eyes were only half closed, her parched mouth open.

Martini looked long, long into that dear face, and then upon the bent body of her father. His hope in life had been quenched long ago. Now his heart was utterly crushed. His love—'tis true, had been hopeless, but he had rejoiced at least in the belief that she, for whose life he could have shed his heart's blood, had found happiness in the love of one whom he had thought better fitted to shed lustre on her life than he himself could. Now she lies there with death imprinted on her face; little more than a child herself she leaves an offspring. Alas! that of shame. A frail bark to be tossed about and wrecked upon the pitfalls of life like its mother.

"No! no! dear Clare," he murmured, taking her hand gently into his, "by your sacred memory—by the true and undying love I bore you—I vow in this supreme and awful moment of your death, that your child shall find in me loving succor!"

It was a marvel how the blind father passed through the ordeal. Now, a prey to hope, and again to misery; and when that young life had ebbed away he lost the only treasure he had held on earth. The universe, so rich to others, was now but a wilderness to him.

Clare died with the setting of the sun. Its declining rays had cast a parting glance upon that poor girl's last breath; as if bidding an adieu to its kindred. Clare had been her father's orb, illuminating his darkness, and it had set to him forever.

CHAPTER XV.

No pen could adequately describe the grief of her father, who had lost all that was dearest to his heart. Her life now was extinct; he could not recall it. Life at the best would have been but a burden to her, that would have crushed her sooner or later. Her heart-strings were snapped by a cruel blow, dealt by one, whom, from all others, she had elected to bring life's joy to it! It was the knowledge of this which gnawed on his heart and mind. And he is but a blind, helpless man, unable to mete out to that villian the just punishment for the cruel wrong perpetrated upon his child. That guilty wretch still strides the earth, and as his lustful eyes covet it, he will pluck here and there more victims, and bring sorrow and desolation to other hearts and homes. And the Bible teaches, "That God is just, protects the innocent, and smites the evil-doer with His wrath."

When the time came for Clare's body to be lowered into its last resting place, father and friend stood by the grave uttering fervent, silent prayers that her soul may rest in peace forever.

After the simple but impressive rituals of the church the blind man, led by Martini, returned to the now desolate home.

Martini was overpowered with the emotions of the last few days. Clare's image would float before his eyes, and then again the room seemed full of phantoms, each resem-

bling Clare's betrayer's ghastly corpse. His mind seemed confused, his body overpowered with a nervousness and restlessness. He must not succumb to that; not now.

Can they, with unholy passions soiled through the contact with vice around them, comprehend the turmoil in a man's mind and heart; who full of noble instincts, capable of the purest love, finds the altar before which he had worshiped desecrated by one into whose hands he had yielded his holiest for safe-keeping?

Martini was crushed by the blow that had fallen so suddenly and unexpectedly on him. His thoughts were filled with reminiscences of her loveliness—who was the compeer of the purest and noblest of her sex—and this was the end of a life that once had been so promising. He thought of his struggles to smoulder at least the glowing embers in his heart, because Clare could not respond to his love. And she had loved that man!

He had since lived, 'tis true, and pursued the even tenor of a joyless life, because of a hope to meet her again, to hear again the sweet tones of her voice. He had met her at last, only to gaze on her face, in the throes of death. It was not until after the funeral that he experienced the darkness that had fallen upon his life. He had suffered before, but not with the intensity that he suffered now. One ray of comfort broke upon him. The thought of her child, and of his now helpless friend, both depending on his loving care.

Two days after Clare's body had been laid to rest, Martini, the blind artist and child, took the boat for New York, leaving the cottage in care of a trusted servant for the disposal of Van Alden.

CHAPTER XVI.

Helen had accepted Van Alden's invitation to the opera. She looked ravishingly beautiful as she appeared before her escort, with a flush and pleased smile on her face, his admiring glances had produced.

Her complexion was of a transparency that belongs to her age. Her hair was a golden hue, luxurient. Her superb eyes impressed you for their depth of purity and innocence. Her every movement was that of grace and refinement. She was exquisitely dressed, not with intent of display, but careful to every detail, for which some women deserve the highest praise.

At the first strains of the overture Helen and her escort entered the opera-box. The house was tremendously crowded with the elite of Liverpool, it being a gala performance in honor of the royal visitor.

The curtain had risen.

Helen, who loved music, listened attentively to the artistic rendering of Verdi's scores.

Van Alden noticed her rapt attention. He had listened to the music of Traviata many times before.

After the curtain had descended amidst the plaudits of the spectators, Helen turned her gaze upon her admirer, saying: "I must crave your pardon because of my undivided attention to the music. I could not resist the desire to listen to every note flowing so crystal-like and sweetly from the Diva's throat."

"Is this the first time that you have listened to the music of Traviata?" asked Van Alden.

"Yes," replied Helen, "although I am familiar with some of its scores. Who is not?"

"Are you familiar with the plot?" inquired Van Alden.

"I think I am. It 's somewhat similar to 'Camille.'"

"And have you enjoyed the play as well?" inquired Van Alden.

"I enjoyed the acting, but disliked the plot and some of the characters portrayed."

"Which are the characters you most dislike in 'Camille?'" asked Van Alden, gazing at her in a manner which reassured her as to his motive in having asked the question.

Helen did not reply at once. Had any other gentleman requested her opinion, she would have answered evasively. After a pause, she said: "I despise the character of *Armand;* pity *Camille*, and sympathize with the father."

"Woman-like," remarked Van Alden, pleasantly.

"Do you think us partial to our sex?" inquired Helen.

"'T is natural that you should feel inclined that way," he replied.

"You judge us better than mankind in general. It is said that woman is woman's greatest enemy. Thanks, Mr. Van Alden, for your more charitable opinion," said Helen archly, adding: "Do you expect me to give you the reason for despising the one, pitying the second, and sympathising with the last?"

"I have a natural curiosity to hear your criticism," replied Van Alden.

A knock at the door elicited Van Alden's invitation to enter.

Lord Darvey, Herbal and the Judge were the newcomers.

Van Alden arose and offering his chair to Lord Darvey, said: "My lord, pray have the kindness to lift the incognito of the many interesting persons here assembled, for the benefit of Miss Powell."

Lord Darvey, bowing politely to Helen, accepted the proffered seat, saying: "Whilst your opera glass will assist you to discern the faces interesting you most, my tongue will portray their pedigrees, if I know them."

Helen smiled, saying pleasantly, "Mr. Van Alden penetrates the thoughts and wishes of my sex on such like occasions. I admit that, having noticed many lovely faces and most elegant toilets, I long to know more of their owners—at least from hearsay. I therefore accept you as an instructor, my lord, and will ask you at once who that lovely girl is, opposite, in the second box to the right."

"She is the daughter of Sir Dalker, a very rich distiller, whom our most gracious queen has knighted because of his munificence to our city. He is indeed a liberal gentleman, who readily parts with at least some of his gains, honorable and highly esteemed. 'T is true that the seed he helps to sow buds into a poisonous fruit, which, if tasted, eats into the vitals of mankind. Who can blame him, because of a husbandry that is fostered, encouraged and protected by the government that thrives on its revenue. Who will blame him for a husbandry the millions envy, and would gladly follow a calling that ultimately brings emoluments and honor. For the loathsome scenes the gentleman's traffic

brings to the surface, and that offends so much the eyes, his munificence invites us to other scenes—the productions of a Raphael, a Rubens, a Van Dyke, etc., men superior in art, but who never reaped such golden harvest.

"The gentleman with them is a newspaper man, who, after leading a checkered career, became a political writer. He is now an avowed Republican, who gloats in his mind at the power he wields, that shall undermine the throne, destroy aristocracy, all established government, and transfer the legislative and executive power upon the streets. In the meantime the gentleman adopts the air and manners, as well as the expensive habits of the hated aristocracy."

Interrupting himself suddenly, he said: "I must beg your pardon, Miss Powell, for having deviated from my duty to introduce to your notice only such objects as may interest you."

"My lord," said Helen, "you possess the art of interesting me even in objects not of my own choosing. I can only be the gainer by following your lead."

"Thank you, Miss Powell," said Lord Darvey, pleasantly.

The curtain had again risen, and Helen's attention was directed once more toward the stage.

Herbal and the Judge were discussing the political agitations of the day, the Irish question, land-league, evictions, etc.

"We Americans," said the Judge, "sympathize with people appealing to us for help in a deserving cause. We assist Ireland's agitation with our purses, but do not thereby imply our approval of all the means they adopt to gain their end. I will say as much in favor of your government,

that our sheriffs, charged with the execution of the mandates of the courts, would, if need be, use Gatling guns, instead of battering rams, to enforce submission to a law enrolled upon the statute book."

"How long do you intend remaining in the city?" inquired Van Alden of the Judge.

"We have concluded to depart for London on Monday next," replied the Judge. "We will remain there a fortnight, and then leave for Scotland, a country full of interest to myself and niece. It is my parents' native land."

Shortly before the curtain had dropped on the *finale*, Lord Darby, Herbal and the Judge had left the box.

Helen and Van Alden, on leaving the theatre, were the magnet that attracted the admiring glances of the people surging through the corridors towards the exit. Rightly so, for they were, indeed, a strikingly handsome couple—one may as well say, "a masterpiece of the human mould."

In the dining-room of the hotel, supper awaited them.

"I thank you for the very pleasant evening, Mr. Van Alden," said Helen. "How nice it is to meet friends in a foreign country, and so unexpectedly at that. What a delightful afternoon I spent in the charming company of Lord and Lady Darvy, Mr. Herbald, and in yours also, Mr. Van Alden."

"My dear Helen," said the Judge, smilingly, "I fear that you've had too much of a good thing in one day. It may unfit you for our tomorrow's contemplated excursion."

Helen looked at the Judge roguishly, saying, "You are broaching the possibility of my disappointing you tomorrow, and keeping you at home, watching my poor

exhausted self, instead of the pleasure you anticipated from the visit to the ancient Chester Cathedral. No fear! I will be ready tomorrow in good time." Turning to Van Alden, she said: "Would you care to be one of the party? Perhaps you have nothing better on hand."

Van Alden accepted the invitation with thanks.

CHAPTER XVII.

"My dear Helen," said Mrs. Betts, a widow, who had been Helen's trusted nurse in childhood, "it does my heart good to see you looking so well and fresh after your day's dissipation. I wonder, my dear, if that handsome gentleman, your former visitor in Morganville, has purposely followed you across. Why, dear child, you need not blush. 'Tis nothing wrong to fall in love with the handsome girl that you are. Neither is it wrong if a girl falls in love with such a handsome fellow, provided she knows that he be worthy of her affections. You will have the pick of many. I hope you will choose the right one. It is terrible to choose the wrong one."

"My dear Marian," said Helen, "you are surmising matters of which I have not even dreamt. Mr. Van Alden is a gentleman who can choose his time for travel, or any other pursuit, at will. It is but a coincident that we have met. The gentleman that he is, he may feel like showing me some polite attentions—no more nor less than he would to any lady he knows and meets. If he followed me on purpose, he must let me become aware of it. If he does—well, then, I will think it over, and see what I will think of it. I do not intend to have my good night's rest spoiled by you. There! Now let us retire, and say no more about it."

Helen had her night's rest considerably curtailed. Mrs. Betts had told her what she herself suspected, only she had no desire that the knowledge of it should rob her of many

hours of sleep. But she could not prevent it. She could not understand why that handsome fellow occupies her thoughts, even whilst preferring sleep to wakefulness. If she enjoys looking at nice things, nice people, handsome ladies, and even handsome men, in day-time, she had hitherto never given them a thought at bed-time. Now, she lies with her eyes tightly closed, and yet that handsome fellow's face and form creeps persistently before her gaze. She had always maintained, and still maintains, that it would not be a handsome man, she would care treasuring in her thoughts and heart; a property that one must daily expose to the longing gaze of the many coveting it, alluring it, and, ultimately, to be robbed of. "Poor me!" she soliloquized, "if such is the case, and it is not less true what I am often told, that I am handsome; and if men think as I, Uncle Bob will surely have me cheering his lonely hours for life. No! Women are different from men! This last thought relieved the anxiety she felt coming over her, not because of a fear of her remaining Uncle Bob's companion. Oh, no! But because of a probability of becoming a forlorn, lonely old maid, later. She had always heard (rightly or wrongly) that old maids are a spiteful, disagreeable, sour-looking sort of beings; and she would not care to grow to be that. Oh, no! Yes, she soliloquized, handsome women are different from handsome men. So very much different! Has she not often been told how these fine-looking fellows in society, and on the streets, challenge, unblushingly, women's admiration; but an admiring, impertinent glance (which she never challenges) of unknown men, brings to her face a flush of indignation.

Wherefore the difference? Mrs. Loewenhaupt, her friend and teacher, often told her, 'tis because of men's public life, and from their unrestricted mode of living, that their sense of nicety gets rubbed off, and begets habits and tastes, with which we women can feel nothing in common; and that our sex has been created, and is called upon to lend, if we can, a helping hand with which to lead them in due time into a channel of safety, repose, and true happiness; provided, we have not ourselves forfeited the right, and have not lost our fitness to accomplish our mission.

If wakefulness at bedtime is the beginning of what one calls love, then surely she must be on the verge of loving.

How strange! Is it possible that she feels akin to love for a man who is undoubtedly the handsomest she had ever met, but of whom she has seen so little, and only because he is a fascinating and dashing society man. Is she about to become prey to that turbulent feeling she has read so much about in books, and heard spoken of in real life? A feeling that casts to the winds every vestige of calm reasoning, blinding our mind, not only to trifling imperfections with which every human being is more or less afflicted, but to imperfections which must victimize the heart and soul, flattering ourselves with a belief that love is the talismanic remedy that will cure the evil traits and passions deeply rooted in life. No! She shall not become a victim to a like feeling—a mere passion, as Uncle Bob calls it, robbing us even of our slumber. Begone, you handsome fellow, else I will hate you, instead of liking you. Do you hear?

The threat must have frightened the vision, for it vanished slowly, slowly. At last Helen fell into a sound slumber.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The reader is aware that Van Alden is a handsome man. Of generous disposition, he is lavish to a fault, like many that are born with a silver spoon in their mouth. He is not only a universal favorite, a hail fellow with men, but is adored by the fair sex—and rightly so. The woman must be blind who could deny admiration to his stately figure, his fine features and expressive eyes. He is wonderfully fascinating. Wherever he goes he takes his place in the foremost ranks. Life is with him a fairy tale, and the fairy land keeps him pretty close within its embrace. Generous as his impulses are, and with all his notions of honor and integrity he would not hesitate to trespass on both if they entailed on him a sacrifice to relinquish the pursuit of enjoyment.

Had he been born under less auspicious circumstances; had he been compelled to learn the many lessons of life; the needful renunciations, and the serious application of all his faculties to gain a sure footing, by which to climb safely toward the goal of noble aspirations; undoubtedly, with the seeds kind Providence had implanted within him, he might have budded into a being that would have stamped him one of those noble men who bring so much lustre to their escutcheons.

Without the guiding mind of loving parents who had left him but the vast accumulation of their industry and thrift, a power for evil in the hands of the young and in-

experienced, they had afforded him a magic wand that he wielded for evil, that had subjected his mind to a disease which rarely yields to a radical cure; and to all appearances unfitted him to become the source from which Helen could derive happiness.

Van Alden, after bidding the Judge "Good night," sought the open air.

Lime street could even at that late hour boast of many pedestrians. Some were hurrying towards a seeming destination. Others apparently just leaving the public houses, whose doors had been closed to them for the night, were in a less sound condition to journey onwards, because of the antics their tipsy state played them.

A gentlemanly young fellow leaned against a wall in close proximity to our hero. The only consciousness his drunken stupor had left him was the danger of striking the ground.

Urchins, barefooted and in tatters, shouted at the top of their voices, "'Echo,' 'Evening News,' latest edition! Brutal murder of a woman by her drunken husband!" Others, "Matches! Only a penny a box! Matches, sir!"

Repulsive, besotted, abandoned women passing by, would stare into Van Alden's face with admiring glances.

A jauntily dressed girl, barely out of her teens, asked him the hour, smiling with her best.

Drunken sailors, with their girls linked arm in arm, or with arms around their necks, were singing songs to which decency had better close its ears.

The stalwart form of a bobby appearing and striking the

curb with his bludgeon; the noise would vibrate through the stillness of the night and give a warning sound to the late revelers and evil-doers.

The fresh air Van Alden had sought seemed to him impregnated with the venomous fumes from the scum of humanity. The impure sights seemed not to harmonize with his thoughts dwelling on that lovely girl, the walls of the Northwestern harbored, for he re-entered the hotel and sought his room.

Until recently he had never given the future a serious thought. The future, as a matter of course, thought he, would be to him the same as the past had been.

Helen's loveliness had been the incentive for his following her abroad. Having found her, the irresistible charm she had previously spread around him seemed enhanced.

His mind had awakened to the positive fact, that he seriously contemplated a leap, the measurement of which he must calculate, and assure himself that he could undertake it with safety. And why not? he soliloquised; I may as well follow the rest of mankind, and incorporate into the conjugal state.

She is a most lovely being, well born, and worthy of becoming my wife. The rest will follow. Herself? Why should she not be happy as my wife, sharing my wealth and position, and envied by her sex.

I can surely contribute largely to her happiness. Besides, she is quite as sensible as she is beautiful.

'Tis true—he had long since thought it impossible to derive any satisfaction from matrimony. But—he had, as he now thought, never before met a Helen. Having met one,

he felt sure that marital state with her would always leave on his palate at least an inkling, and that is as much as any sensible pair could expect.

Thus, Van Alden reasoned with himself, and resolved to woo. He never doubted his ability to win her.

Pleased with his resolution, he sought the rest he thought he was in need of.

Slumber had scarcely overtaken him, when the door leading from the adjoining room into his bed-chamber opened, and a man crept stealthily toward the bed, before which he remained motionless.

The piercing dark eyes of this nocturnal visitor gazed on the sleeper with a woe be-gone look that gradually changed into an expression of hatred.

The voice, which at first muttered curses between the compressed lips, suddenly shrieked into Van Alden's ear, "Murderer! foul murderer!"

The startled sleeper opened his eyes, and beheld the threatening form. To his horror, he felt his faculties of motion and speech benumbed and paralyzed. He was unable to utter even a sound of alarm, although conscious of danger.

The man's appearance at night boded no good to him. Is that man an escaped lunatic? His glaring eyes suggest it. He had called him a murderer. If, from a motive of imaginary wrong, he should wreak his vengeance on him, and kill him! Terrible! Him self-helpless, and unable to ward off the blow that may send him into eternity! Such were the thoughts that flashed through his mind.

He could only gaze on that threatening figure with defiance, and helplessly await the worst.

Suddenly, the man turned toward the door by which he had entered. At a given signal, men, clad in sombre garments, entered, carrying a bier, upon which a coffin rested. On reaching the centre of the room, they placed it on the floor. Then two stalwart men, with formidable axes, using them with terrific force upon the tiles of the floor, made an aperture, into which they lowered the coffin, amidst solemn, plaintive chants. Then they approached, in solemn manner, the bed upon which he rested. He felt their grasp, and noticed that they placed him upon the bier, and that they were carrying him in solemn procession from the room into the hall, down the stairway into the vestibule, which was thronged with the guests of the hotel, all gazing in awe at the unwonted sight.

On the threshold of the hotel he beheld Helen. How lovely she looked—only that the expression of her face had changed from its usual joyousness to that of suffering. By her side stood a man. How strange! Not exactly like the terrible figure that had appeared only shortly before at his bedside—yet a familiar one—one he had met before, only somewhat changed. Yes, he remembers now, that figure once stood like now before a lovely being—Clare!

"Oh, my God!" he muttered. Now he felt the night air, and it seemed that he was being carried through dimly-lighted streets. The footsteps of the cortege fell ominously on his ears, and the sound re-echoed through the deserted streets. On they marched without rest, until they entered within an iron gate that had opened by invisible hands. In its inclosure white spectre-like shadows beckoned him welcome. The men carrying him stopped suddenly before—

Oh horror!—an open grave lately dug, ready to entomb a body that, weary of the cares of life, had come to seek rest and shelter in its embrace. "But he is alive!"

An icy perspiration covered his body, that shook like an aspen leaf. A horror seized him on noticing the preparations, indicating their intention of burying him alive.

Those fiends in human form will have no mercy on him! He reads in their stern faces the terrible doom awaiting him. No help, no friend in this dire moment near him! And he thought he had thousands!

He would pay his weight in gold if only one would come and loosen the fetters that held him to the bier. Alas! no one can hear him, even if he were able to utter a sound.

Presently two men approach him, and grasping him, count "one, two, three," and fling him into the grave.

Striking the cold, damp ground, and the pain the fall produced, loosened the bane. With a piercing shriek of agony he awoke, and found the cortege, phantoms, grave, all had vanished, and himself snugly in bed—ascertaining, to his great relief, that he had only dreamed.

A moment later, the night-watch, who had heard his shriek, knocked at the door, inquiring, "Has anything happened?" to which inquiry he answered in the negative.

Van Alden felt greatly perturbed. Although not of a superstitious turn of mind, the vividness of the dream had nevertheless filled him with vague fears and misgivings, which he could not banish at will. After tossing restlessly about for a length of time, nature again exacted its tribute, and once more slumber overtook him.

CHAPTER XIX.

The morning after Helen's visit to the opera, we find her seated at her writing desk, addressing Mrs. Loewenhaupt a letter, wherein she informs her of her own and Uncle Bob's good health, and among other matters of having met Mr. Van Alden abroad. "'T is the gentleman I mentioned to you in my last letter from Morganville. I will keep my promise to you, and will henceforth send you reports of my travels and everything pertaining to myself."

Presently Judge Brown entered the room and greeting her in a fatherly manner, remarked how well pleased he was to see her look so bright and in such high spirits, after the previous day's dissipation.

"My dear Helen," he continued, taking a seat by her side; "you are aware that I treasure you in my heart as I would my own child, and that your happiness concerns me above all other things; for the same promotes my own. My sincere wish is that you should yet remain free, for a time at least, from those serious demands life will make on you later. I need not tell you that the most endearing and ennobling tie of our early life is filial love. In later years is added the love of the husband, the father, the wife, and the mother. In these affections lie the whole of our happiness. If to the faithful performance of our duties toward mankind we add the essence of our worship of God.

"Providence has denied you the outpouring of filial affections, but there remains to you the happiness in the

love of a wife and mother, if the Almighty shall vouchsafe as much to you. Your heart is tender, its feelings deep; love will be the mainstay of your life, the foundation of your earthly happiness. If you bestow it upon one worthy and fitted to return to you as much as you give.

"I am aware that Mr. Van Alden admires you; the blush upon your face assures me that you are not displeased at the knowledge: He spoke to me last night of his intention to visit you in Morganville, but the information that we had left on a foreign tour, led him to undertake the journey at once, in hopes of meeting us and joining us in our rambles.

"He belongs to one of the foremost families in New York and enjoys a princely income. As far as wordly and social advantages are concerned, he is a man whose honorable attentions the best woman in the land need not hesitate to receive.

"I am also aware of his reputation of being a gay society man; a man of the world. That in itself would not speak less in his favor. Such men in their mature years often prove good husbands, provided the contact with all that life had offered them has not sucked from the root the healthy sap, leaving but a diseased trunk, with decayed branches, and fruit, from which to partake, must sicken one, and prevent enjoying life's more healthful nourishment.

"My dear child," he continued impressively, "you must not open your heart too spontaneously to one whom your imagination only has chosen to touch its chords. It may at at first produce heavenly sounds, while reality later may produce discords galling upon your ears and mind, that may snap your tender life-strings in twain.

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"Mr. Van Alden has all the attributes to kindle the susceptibility of your sex, and if he chooses, fan them into a flame that may consume their very reasoning power, and plunge them into a vortex, within which they may perish.

"I am thankful to know that you are equipped with keen penetration into human nature, and with a goodly portion of common sense. Both will assist you greatly in the part you will take in life. I therefore look with equanimity on that handsome man's endeavors to win you. If you find his heart and mind sound, and you should feel that you can trust your happiness in his safe keeping, I will rejoice on the day that will unite you with one who has then proven himself worthy of your love."

Helen had listened to the end without interruption. Deeply moved, she took the Judge's hand into her own, and pressing it to her lips, said:

"I lost my dear parents ere I could realize the extent of filial love. But Providence has blessed the orphan girl with your parental affection, and has in return concentrated on you, my dear uncle, all the filial love she could have felt for them had they lived. I have always held up to your gaze my innermost thoughts and feelings. As I have done hitherto, I shall do now, and hereafter.

"I am no more nor less like the many young girls," she continued, "foolish as they are called by the wiser heads, but who have thought and felt like ourselves. The wisdom they attained by experience qualifies them to become our advisers. We undoubtedly ought to listen to what they tell us; only other more potent oracular voices whisper into our ears a language more akin to our youthful conception.

Wisdom, if it can be obtained, must be bought, even if we must pay dearly for it. Youth will dream and live in a dreamy land. Its sweet visions and recollections will afford us, in later years, a retrospect in what we loved to soar. "Dear uncle," she continued, with an archness, "how can we young visionary beings look otherwise than with adoration upon one whom, as we are taught, God has created after his own image, and had destined to become our Lord and master upon earth, placing him before our imagination resplendent in noble attributes, speaking to us the language of love, full of tenderness and affection."

"If my Lord and master should have appeared to me in the disguise of the gentleman you spoke of now, and he is, as you have said, possessed of such magnetic power, how shall I evade my fate? Can we control the loud pulsations of the heart, and command its silence, until our reason tells us that the man of our heart's choosing has stood the tests caution impelled us to impose? Must we really deaden our imagination because of a fear that same may bring disappointment, grief—nay, misery even, and embody in our early lives the grave thoughts of a mature age.

"Young nature," she continued, thoughtfully, "does it not surrender to the first warm glimpse of spring? If, later, an icy northerly destroys its early yield, it can only mourn the loss, but never blame itself for having yielded to the behest of a higher power. Thus it is with us when we yield our young hearts to the first warm rays of a manifestating love. Only being superior to dumb nature, we are able to discern in our, what we believed spotless heaven, —first, 'the impure specks as they appear; then the

dark growing clouds that are foreshadowing a coming tempest.'"

This cautions us to seek a safe shelter from its devastating pathway, and having will power, we ought not neglect it, if the repose and the purity of our soul is of greater import to us than the impure cravings of the heart. As much as I would turn with disgust and horror from a contagious or infectious garment, and would not suffer it to come near me, as much would I recoil from the touch of one if I became aware that his acts, principles, habits and thoughts are sordid. I would a thousand times rather crush my heart than surrender myself to one whom I could neither honor nor respect."

"If you, dear uncle, call these 'my thoughts and feelings,' my common sense, then it is an article my sex can easily make themselves owners of; and must make themselves owners of, else suffer the penalty. If I should dream a romance, 'a sensible one'—I could dream no other—the hero of which is to be Mr. Van Alden, and I must find a rude awakening, I hope that I will awake before the completion of the last scene; should it come too late! Well, then I will have to submit to a fate for which I have been destined by a higher power."

Saying this, she gazed inquiringly at the Judge.

He divined the meaning of her glance, and said, "I am well pleased with the sentiment you expressed. It is what I expected of you."

CHAPTER XX.

The outline of the metropolis of a mighty empire towered before Helen's gaze, who, with the Judge, Van Alden and Mrs. Betts, occupied a first-class compartment of the express approaching London.

A mighty city that like no other one presents greater contrast and extremes of human life. Regents Park, and adjoining neighborhoods, the many thoroughfares in the West End,—a city of plenty. St. Giles, Wapping, and many more like them, the habitations of poverty; where men and women live whose appearance are stripped of every lineament of humanity. Devils disguised in repulsive human form filling you with disgust and hurries your footsteps as you gaze at them.

In London where, perhaps, fifty thousand live in luxury, which our most vivid imagination even could not contemplate; there are living twice that number who do not know when they rise in the morning where they will lay their heads at night.

Williston Junction passed, the express soon reached its final stopping place.

On Helen's alighting, assisted by Van Alden (the Judge and Mrs. Betts following), a gentleman and lady (apparently awaiting our travelers) approached them.

The gentleman, lifting his hat politely and addressing the Judge, asked: have I the pleasure of addressing Judge Brown.

Receiving a reply in the affirmative, he introduced himself and lady as the Hon. Mr. and Miss Lansing, and that they came to offer them their mother's (dowager Lady Darvy's) hospitality pending their stay in London.

The Judge, in behalf of himself and Helen, thankfully declined, accepting, however, the offer of their carriage. Miss Lansing, Helen, the Judge and Mrs. Betts entered the handsome equipage.

Mr. Lansing and Van Alden having attended to the baggage, strolled leisurely from the station.

Ethel Lansing is one of the well-known type of English girls, of which many belong to the higher classes and walks of life. She is of good figure—full and rounded, giving her a womanish appearance, which you would not expect from her years, although she looks younger than she actually is. Her complexion is fair, with blue eyes, golden, more flaxen-like, hair, which glitters in the sunshine; rosy lips, that would tempt you to steal from them a kiss.

Although she looked truly feminine, of seeming gentle disposition, yet, those who knew her intimately, are aware of her seasons of temper, the climax of which are often appalling. The bark of her existence is often tossed by such tempests. She is clever, and can display some accomplishments. She sings beautifully, paints with a degree of taste, and has a remarkable aptitude of acquiring knowledge of all kinds. She is a first-rate equestrienne, a good dancer, and also fond of all sorts of feminine gaities. Her affections are such, "she could love many, no particular kind, but could love one person better than the other."

As the honorable Miss Lansing plays but a minor part in

this narrative, I have sufficiently described her for the purpose.

On their arrival at the Metropole, and after receiving Helen's promise to be ready on the following day, at the hour named, for the contemplated visit and introduction to her mother, Ethel Lansing took her departure.

Our travelers were soon comfortably installed in their respective apartments, where we will leave them for the present, and return to Van Alden, who, as we are aware, had left St. Pancras station, in company with Mr. Lansing.

The honorable Archibald Lansing is a man about thirty years of age, tall, of a florid complexion. He is the second son of the late Lord Darvey, whose family name was Lansing ere he succeeded to the title and rent-roll of his deceased cousin, Lord Maurice Darvey.

Archibald Lansing is not a handsome man, but sufficiently good-looking to find favor with the fair sex. He is jovial, has ingratiating manners. He is frank, good-hearted, but an unprincipled, fashionable *roue*. Besides a legacy his father had left him, he had inherited an annual income of about £2,000 from his maiden aunt, his mother's sister. Lansing and Van Alden had met eight years ago in Paris and London, and are not strangers to each other.

Lansing had not recognized the youth he met years ago, nor had Van Alden recognized Lansing—the full beard disguising, somewhat, his youthful looks.

"My dear boy," said Lansing to Van Alden, "you have grown a capital-looking fellow since we last met. 'Tis bad taste for a man to pay another a compliment—but, by jove! The truth is the truth. I will stick to you if only for the

fun of seeing our girls goggle at you. Are you going to stop at the Metropole?" he continued. "I believe you are love-struck. 'Pon honor, I won't try to cut you out; deuced little chance I would stand against you. She is a fine girl! Where did you meet her—on her travels?" were the questions following each other in rapid succession.

Van Alden, amused at his friend's eagerness for information concerning Helen, replied: "Miss Powell, undoubtedly, would feel highly flattered were she aware of the impression she has made on the first gentleman she had the pleasure of meeting in London. The more so, if she knew, as I know of old, what a renowned connoisseur of feminine loveliness you are. The lady is an acquaintance whom I met in the States. As open confession is said to be good for the soul," he continued, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "I will appoint you my father confessor, and acknowledge that you hit the nail on the head by implying that I am love-struck. I need not remind you, my dear fellow, of the sacredness of the confessional."

"How is life in London?" Van Alden now asked, endeavoring thereby to change the subject. "I presume it is the gay old place it used to be. I will be in need of some one to show me the sights. I have no doubt but that you are a shining light, that can illuminate the paths of pleasure."

"How long do you intend remaining in London?" inquired Lansing.

"Four weeks at the most," replied Van Alden.

"The Judge and Miss Powell will leave for Scotland in a fortnight. Two weeks later I will join them in Perth.

From there we will make a tour through France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany, returning again to London. Such is our project at present. Pending Miss Powell's sojourn in London, my time will be at her disposal. After she leaves, you must take me in hand. By the way," he added, "Miss Powell desires to see the sights of London—sights of interest, in general."

"Make use of me," rejoined Lansing. "I will be at your service whenever you desire it. Mother will be very sorry," he continued, "that the Judge has declined her hospitality. Fred wrote to her, a few days ago, mentioning the Judge's, Miss Powell's, and your presence in Liverpool, and wired her this morning, naming the hour you would arrive. She will expect you, Frank, at the house very often."

"I will not fail to make use of her kind invitation," rejoined Van Alden.

They had now approached "Pond's and Spier's." Entering, they partook of some iced claret, continuing their conversation for a time.

On separating, Van Alden, hailing a passing hansom, was driven to the Metropole.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was the evening of their first day in London. Helen had declined Van Alden's invitation to the Lyceum, saying: "I would prefer a stroll in the fresh air."

Sauntering along the Strand, a thoroughfare usually thronged with pedestrians at that hour, some, hurrying towards the places of amusement, so numerous in the neighborhood; others merely walking to and fro, adding thereby to the animation of the scene, Helen, addressing Van Alden, said: "It is my serious intention to hold you to your promise. I desire to acquaint myself with the phases of London life, so graphically described; at least with such as are not offensive to womanliness. I am not traveling merely for pleasure, but also to gain information upon matters of interest. I will give you a proof of the esteem in which I hold you, by trusting entirely to your discretion as a guide," she added, looking at him with a blush on her lovely face.

"It will afford me great pleasure if I acquit myself to your satisfaction of the trust imposed, and I will endeavor to acquaint you with such phases of London life as will interest you most, the social ones excepted, for they will be brought to your notice through other channels. You will find that society here is more or less the same as elsewhere, differing only in national characteristic, though the pleasures are enhanced by the great wealth of the city," rejoined Van Alden.

They had now approached the Strand Theatre. Flaming placards heralding the play "Camille" attracted their attention.

Van Alden cast a furtive glance at his lovely companion.

Helen thought she interpreted its meaning, and addressing him, said: "That play recalls our conversation at the opera in Liverpool. You asked my opinion regarding the characters of Dumas' play. I may as well tell you now."

"Men and women," she continued, "may with impunity tear down the barrier that caste and wealth forces upon them in the choice of their affections, provided they are worthily bestowed. Had Armand, of noble birth, learned to love the mind, beauty and grace with which the author, for a purpose so charmingly, but fictitiously, endowed Camille, not as yet contaminated and not out of the pale of decent society, his love could have been approved and would have seemed natural. Under existing circumstances it was but an illusion; although the author by elaborate diction tries to impress us differently." Then, adding with great earnestness, "a man owes it to his honor, name and self respect to stifle an unholy love that must ultimately lead him into an abyss wherein he must bury all that is worth living for. I might exonerate a man who, spell-bound by the influence of a siren, and because of the fetters with which she holds him bound to her, forgets his own better self, but if once freed from the spell, and by her own free will at that, he should thank Providence for the release from the thralldom. Armand follows Camille, knowing her faithless, to take an unmanly vengeance! Do

you not think. Mr. Van Alden, that such a man deserves to be despised?"

Van Alden, astonished at the intensity with which she had revealed her sentiment, looked thoughtful, and then replied: "You forget, Miss Powell, that Armand believed in the purity of her love for him, in the contrition for her past life, but finds her faithless."

"Would the knowledge of this justify the act—finding her in the midst of sin from whence he had taken her to treasure her in his heart?" asked Helen. "I understand your chivalrous endeavor to defend an absent culprit, but I do not think you serious, Mr. Van Alden, and therefore my judgment must stand."

Van Alden, amused at the arch expression on her face, said, laughingly: "The culprit's case is lost, after your forcible arraignment of his guilt; I am ashamed at my attempt to mislead your judgment. I must apologize," he continued, "for having at one time implied a partiality, should you be called upon to sit in judgment on your sex. Indeed, Miss Powell, you have shown yourself more severe towards Camille than I thought you would."

"You err, Mr. Van Alden," rejoined Helen, "I pity Camille, and had she been a living being, and within my reach, I would willingly have helped her to a better life; and if she had made an honest attempt in that direction, I would have thought well of her. Had I been the author," she continued, naively, "Camille would have disappeared by voluntary exile, leaving to Armand no trace of herself. He would soon have forgotten her," she added with a smile. "I would rather have had her seek death than return to a

life she detested, and returning to it for the purpose that her lover may despise her! So unnatural for a woman, be she even of the lowest. With a Camille, beautiful, with noble sentiments, capable of an honest love, returning to her former life, I can have no sympathy. I spoke to you candidly on a subject, Mr. Van Alden, on which you requested my opinion. I could only have spoken to a friend in the manner I did. As you have revealed your manly sentiments for me, and I felt no displeasure at your having said that much, I have in return apprised you of some of my innermost thoughts. "Later," she continued, with a blush mantling her cheeks, "I may be able to apprise you of the language of the innermost recesses of my heart."

"If language is given to conceal one's thoughts, I feel thankful that you did not deem it necessary to adhere to that at times—wise proverb in the present instance. I am happy beyond measure to know that you deem me worthy of your innermost thoughts. I must content myself with that much for the present, and fondly hope that you will be able to confer on me the greater happiness later," rejoined Van Alden, gazing lovingly into her face.

They had now reached the "Metropole." Entering they were joined by the Judge, who had awaited their return.

Later in the evening our travelers were driven through the popular and brilliantly-lighted thoroughfares, the throngs presenting to Helen's gaze the life and bustle, such as only the streets of London can boast.

CHAPTER XXII.

The following day, at the appointed hour, Helen, the Judge and Ethel Lansing alighted from a handsome equipage before a stately mansion. Entering its portals, they were received by the dowager, Lady Darvey, a ruddy, elderly lady, full of urbanity and good breeding.

"I am glad to meet you," she said pleasantly, addressing the Judge and Helen. "I am sorry you declined my proffered hospitality pending your sojourn in the city. 'T is the inheritance of my young days to be fond of company, and would have been pleased had you decided to stay with us."

It was a stately room which our party entered. Its decorations were vast and magnificent.

Van Alden and Lansing had joined them, and they were soon engaged in a general conversation.

Helen, replying to the hostess' question as to the impression England had so far made on her, said how delighted she felt having visited the British Isle; how she looked with wonder at the height it had advanced to, a height unequaled in the history of the world. How her thoughts had reverted to its history of these many, many centuries. Now an empire, the first nation on earth. How happy she is to be able to tread such ground; the cradle of liberty for the body, mind and conscience; the mother country of her own glorious one, kindred in spirit, religion and speech.

"Indeed, Miss Powell," rejoined Archibald Lansing, "as

an Englishman, I wish that every American would feel and think like yourself. No doubt many do," he continued, "at least those who are bred from our bone. It is a shame that sordid, political or mercenary motives should engender an unfriendly feeling in the States toward us."

"If such a feeling exists," said Van Alden, joining in the conversation, "it exists only amongst those who are easily prejudiced by the harangue of wily politicians, assisted by a subsidized press, seeking only selfish ends."

"'T is natural," he continued, "that the body politic and State should, and they must, uphold such political and commercial advantages as will enhance the interest and welfare of the nation. These interests may often clash with the interests of those with whom we live in friendly relationship; but good sense and real friendly feeling must then find an honorable way of adjustment.

"It would be a sorry day, a misfortune to mankind," continued Van Alden, earnestly, "if two kindred nations, representing the bulwark of liberty and enlightenment, should engage in cutting each other's throats for the gratification of interested spectators, who would only make capital out of it, and that could bode no good to mankind in general. If the errors of a government forced our forefathers, in self-preservation, to shed the blood of kindred, this enlightened generation must not be guilty of a like error, but should crush at once a party that tries to undermine our amicable and peaceful relations."

"Hear! hear!" exclaimed Lady Darvey, with enthusiasm. "These sentiments would do both nations honor to cultivate and act upon. Some of my own kin," she con-

tinued, "a century and a half ago left for your shores and amalgamated with its blood. My son's first choice was a bonnie American lass, as noble a one as ever took pure breath; thus renewing a relationship of which I feel justly proud. Poor girl," she added in a sad tone, tears moistening her eyes, "I can never efface her image from my memory. My dear girls," she now said, addressing Helen and Ethel, "it is pleasant to sit here and chat, but the time draws nigh for our contemplated drive. His Royal Highness, by command of our gracious Queen, holds today a levee, and, as it may interest you to gaze at the throng of equipages and their occupants, we had better get ready.

"At the next levee, Miss Powell, should you remain in London till then, you shall be a debutante under my chaperonage," added the hostess pleasantly.

Half an hour later, the dowager, the Judge, Helen and Ethel were driving toward Hyde Park.

Van Alden and Lansing followed on horseback.

The weather was perfectly charming. Horse-chestnuts, laburniums, hawthorns, lilacs, were all in the most luxuriant bloom.

The whole neighborhood of Hyde Park is a succession of elegant houses. The avenues through which they drove were resplendent with elegant equipages and the pathways thronged with pedestrians, seemingly the well-to-do and artisan classes. The ladies in the carriages and on foot, with some exceptions, simply but tastefully dressed.

Helen thought she had never seen so many lovely girls and handsome women at one time, and beauty did not seem to belong only to the privileged classes.

"I am delighted with the drive, and with what I have seen," remarked Helen to Ethel. "I could feast my eyes on such lovely and animated sights. I am not of an envious disposition, but, really, I could envy the inhabitants of London, for the daily pleasure at their command. I do not believe that one could ever tire of such scenes."

"Not if they were as enthusiastic as you are, Miss Powell," rejoined Ethel, with a smile. "We stay here throughout the season to enjoy other pleasures than the grating sounds of carriage wheels, that make us drowsy, unless we are fortunate in having pleasant company, such as yourself."

"The throngs of people," she continued, "well, or indifferently dressed, seeking exercise in the pure air of the park, could attract me, if I could walk in the grounds, and flirt with some handsome fellow; meet there some jolly friends, girls and young men, like other girls, and have a jolly good time of it."

"Mamma?" she said, answering Helen's significant look, "Oh! she wouldn't mind. Mother knows that it could do me no harm—rather more good, than the heated atmosphere of a crowded ball-room, coming home in the early morning, tired in body and mind, and were I asked, what pleasure I had derived, I could only truthfully answer, Very little, or none at all. I was the target of sedate matrons and old maids, or of some young ladies receiving less attention, because I felt pleased to dance with one gentleman three dances, or promenaded with one more than once, or because I took more interest in the conversation of an intellectual man. These gossiping tongues," she continued, disdainfully, "will whisper into one another's ears, and in a

manner that others should hear. Look at Ethel Lansing coquetting with Lord B.! She must be silly to think he would have her."

"And yet you say that you live during the season in London, to enjoy its pleasures," remarked Helen.

"When we are in Rome, we must do as the Romans do," replied Ethel, with a smile. "Society, unless we desire to be out of it, imposes on us duties from which we cannot escape, be they even irksome. I could enjoy it for many reasons, if custom would not insist on converting our nights into days, and abjure all that is natural. If we could feel at ease in our social intercourse, and not appear like pickled herrings, tightly encased in uncomfortable dresses, laced like lunatics in straight jackets, and wincing under the torture, because of the mandates of fashion. There is more sense in our village maidens, in their comfortable fitting shoes, loose bodices, short dress, and in their rustic admirers, freed from the coat, neck freed, enjoying their dance, making at the end of each a sortie for fresh air to invigorate their lungs for shouts of real joy, because of the pleasure derived."

"Would you then abolish entirely the present customs of society?" asked Helen, archly. "The art of trimming skillfully the indifferent nature of your less fortunate sisters, who would quail the more under the critical inspection of our fastidious ball-room heroes, and suffer a consequential greater neglect from them. Consider your by nature indifferently endowed sisters, filed in ranks, with hearts throbbing in anticipation of having their programmes dotted with only a few names, of even the lesser shining lights of

the fraternity, called 'gentleman,' who, believing in the proverb, 'handsome is, as handsome does,' and would like to have it said of themselves, fail to act on that truly honest proverb toward their sisters; treating them shabbily, ungentlemanly, because nature has not been more generous towards them than to themselves."

"Yes, Miss Lansing," continued Helen, with a smile, "you must consider, and weigh well, what I have said; and, if you have a sympathetic heart, you will rather suffer a little inconvenience than agitate a departure from custom that must cause still greater suffering among your less-favored sisters."

"Why, Helen!" exclaimed the Judge, who had joined in the merriment Helen's remarks had occasioned. "To my recollection, you always advocated the sentiments Miss Lansing expressed. I am afraid that, seeing the world, has made you worldly. Take care! Else I will bring back to the States a 'society lady' instead of the 'rustic' country girl you were on leaving."

"You have but a man's diplomacy, Uncle—not a particle of woman's," rejoined Helen, in a mirthful tone. "Finding my pet theory, with which I intended revolutionizing society, shared by Miss Lansing, I had to argue against her, as I am too selfish to share the glory it must bring with others." The carriage and the two gentleman riders now passed through Pall Mall, Waterloo place, and other handsome thoroughfares. Crowds of people, of horsemen, carriages of all kinds, surged to and fro.

Half an hour later, our party re-entered the portals of the dowager's mansion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Helen was seated in her room, engaged in writing to Mrs. Loewenhaupt, as she had promised, some of the most important events of her journey.

Yes, my dear friend, she wrote, my travels thus far have been a source of great pleasure, from which I have derived much useful information. All my vague ideas of real life, the world and mankind, are now shaping themselves more distinctly to my mind. I find that the books, from which I derived my first conceptions, came only in some instances near the truth, and that the authors have used their pens more to please the imagination than with an object to initiate the reader into real life, and with human nature.

First of all, you, who has been to me like a loving mother, must be made aware of the import that has approached my near future life. In a previous letter I informed you that Mr. Van Alden sought us abroad, and that I did not feel displeased because of the interest he had thereby demonstrated in my behalf. I suppose it is natural to feel a gratification at the knowledge that we have created an interest in those for whom we entertain a similar feeling. Since I wrote my last, Mr. Van Alden has spoken to me of a more tender feeling, and requested my permitting his endeavor to kindle within me a like one in return—if he is not wholly indifferent to me, I had to grant the gentleman's reasonable manly request, as I could not tell him, at least not honestly, that I felt indifferent towards him.

This must acquaint you with the fact that the gentleman has gained a hold upon my feelings, which, if it is not one of love in the true sense, is at least a kindred sentiment, which, as you once expressed it, 'first buds, to ripen under more potent rays (that are urging themselves into our heart) into a flower whose fragrance impregnates our existence and sweetens the atmosphere we breathe and live in.'

I felt pleased at the manner in which Mr. Van Alden spoke to me of his sentiments; the more so than if he had declared his ardent love in a kneeling posture, so potent to touch the susceptibility of a romantic maiden. A love in which, under circumstances, I would have trusted less, for it would have seemed to me akin to a placid stream, swelled by a sudden tempest into a torrent, which, after its fury is expended, returns to its former placid state. I remember the adage, 'Love me little, love me long.' I believe Mr. Van Alden's sentiment to have some depth; otherwise the proud man he seems to me would hardly have declared an affection for me, who gave him no other encouragent than a friendly appreciation, because of his gentlemanly attention to her.

'T is for this reason that I am willing to treasure within my heart a feeling toward one whom I believe worthy of the love and affection it could yield. You, my dear teacher and more than friend, who has guided my early life, who has spoken to me of the joys, sorrows and duties that fill a woman's existence, can divine my sentiments, because of the knowledge of my approaching a woman's destiny. My thoughts are indeed serene; I have no doubt but that I will

do justice to all the duties awaiting me—duties of which a woman acquits herself joyfully for one who becomes to her all that is dear to her in life. To some misgivings and vague thoughts, which the mind is not always able to throw off at will, I recall your injunction: 'Be true to yourself, and when clouds come to darken some hours of your life, the sunshine in your heart, and (I myself will add), the knowledge of duties honestly fulfilled, will assist me to dispel them.' Therefore, I will no longer try to withstand the magnetism of such a brilliant orb, willing to shelter me under its life-giving rays.

And now, my dear friend, I will turn to other topics. First, to London. I had expressed to Mr. Van Alden a desire to acquaint myself with the different phases of London life. He obtained through the influence of the Hon. Archibald Lansing (brother to Lord Darvey, of whom I have previously written), a guide, in the person of a constable in civil attire. We journeyed through London, visiting the neighborhoods of the poor. Neighborhoods of wretchedness and poverty, such, as I have been told, no other city of civilization harbors. Streets crowded with well-dressed people, equally thronged with crowds of ill-clad, dirty ones. My mind is filled with but one thought; I can entertain no other. It is that of the most inexpressible wretchedness of the many thousands. Mr. Todd (the constable) told us "that these people are looked upon as if they were wild animals, which, if not restrained, would devour and destroy on every side, and that they would be justified, because of a wrong civilization inflicts upon them in an epoch for vast accumulation of wealth to the few and poverty and wretched-

ness to the masses." Pointing to a narrow lane that was swarming with women and children, ragged and dirty enough to merit a pretty strong description, he said: "Civilization dwells near by, passes to and fro. Does it try to better the condition of these wretches? I am only a constable. 'T is but a scanty support to me and my family with the pay I receive, and, therefore, I must shut my eyes to my feeling—that is one of humanity. I wish well to my fellow creatures. I would like to see them all happy; yet, as I traverse the streets, what do I see! Wretchedness! And I must exclaim: Is it decreed that all these people must perish! It is not enough that I must see penury, pain, starvation, disease, but also crime in its worst form! The drunkard reels out of the public house; the brazen wanton walks into it, soon to reel herself into the gutter, and I cannot close the doors that are inviting them to deaden the last spark of humanity, if there is one left. The only mercy it brings them is drowning their misery for the time being. What can I do," continued Mr. Todd, mournfully, (denoting the man of feeling), "the voice of all those wretched, mute petitioners in every street reaches my ear, and I am forced to keep it closed, for I have nothing to be charitable with. I have the will, without the power of doing good. At nights, when I am abroad in the streets, my heart is sore from seeing things which make me sadder than I was in the morning; but I must harden my heart and learn to be callous."

My dear friend! Volumes would not adequately describe the sad picture this city, the emporium of the world's commerce and wealth, brings to the surface; the undeserved

destitution its boundary harbors. Mr. Todd advised us not to notice the barefooted children, women and men. If we felt charitably inclined, he would afford us the opportunity of bestowing charity upon some deserving ones who are in want, and would ask no alms. I am now familiar with sights, the impression of which can never become effaced from memory. The knowledge of such misery should reconcile us fortunate ones to the mishaps that may be allotted to us.

I omitted to mention that on our arrival here we were met at the depot by the Hon. Mr. Lansing, brother of Lord Darvey, and his sister Ethel, who offered us their mother's hospitality. Dear Uncle preferred stopping at the Metropole. We have since called on them several times, and have met there some charming people. I attended, in their company, a soiree, given by the Duchess of M——.

First of all, I must speak of the Dowager, Lady Darvey, who, as I have been told, is a perfect type of an aristocratic lady of the old school, such as we often read about. What a wonderful cheerfulness and vivacity I noticed in her! Not the result of an effort, but evidently inherent. Her conversation, like her spirits, never flagged; she deals with many topics, and seems to possess a memory of uncommon tenacity, for she relates anecdotes, by the dozen, of almost everybody one has heard of. Everything she touches, however trivial and uninteresting in other hands, she shows a mastership in handling.

Miss Lansing, her daughter, is a charming young woman of about twenty-three years, very much admired, I am told. The indulgence she must have received from childhood

made her the willful, impulsive, yet good-hearted woman she seems. The spoiled child of fortune has already spent its treasures of enjoyments, and finds it now difficult to dip content from what there is left for her. I am told that she had bestowed her affections upon a gentleman, deserving of her in every way, but wanting in fortune, and because she would not brave life in a cottage, instead of a palace, to which she was accustomed, refused him. Now she has no affection to bestow. A rumor whispers that she will marry Lord R——, a gentleman of a large rent roll. I met him, and have also heard him spoken of. I assure you, dear friend, I would rather earn my daily bread than own him.

Mr. Lansing, her brother, is the embodiment of gentlemanly courtesy, jovial and very good company; that is about all I know of him.

You have now the descriptions of those I met on more intimate terms, and I will now speak of a dinner and soiree to which we were invited. The people I met there are supposed to be the "*creme dé la creme*" of London society. The Duchess' house is the rendevous of all the fashionable gay spirits. Of her, I must say she is an uncommonly fine-looking lady, about thirty-six years of age. She is said to be fabulously rich. The dinner lasted until nearly ten o'clock. I am not able to judge the cost per head. My mind reverted to the poverty and wretchedness, perhaps not far from her mansion. The dinner service of silver, and dishes in countless succession. The furniture in the room, antique, resplendent with silk and tapestry, and trimmed with gold.

The entrance into the ball-room apprised me again of her

wealth; the interior appearing to me impressibly grand. I must forbear a description. The effort would only show my inability. All I will say is that I had the pleasure and gratification of seeing how wealth could be lavishly used in harmony with exquisite taste. The concert over, tables were again spread with the choicest dainties London can afford, and the manner in which they were presented to our view, and the material with which they were covered, made the scene one of enchantment. We came home after two o'clock.

I am glad, dear friend, because of an evening spent in a social sphere of which I have heard and read so much. But you may rest assured that your "country girl" remains undazzled by the glare of aristocratic life; a life of which you so often spoke to me, and in which you found so little happiness. Some of the glimpses obtained disenchants the spell of many others.

Today I remained quietly at home, and, as you will perceive, have devoted my time penning you this letter. Mr. Van Alden wishes me to remember him kindly to you. He is a dear good fellow, so attentive and full of consideration for my slightest wishes. And now, my dear friend, I will close this lengthy epistle with the assurance of my most sincere affection. Your

HELEN.

P. S.—Next week we leave for Scotland. I will write to you again from Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A pang had touched Reuben Van Alden's heart when he heard of Clare's death. Not from remorse, because of the voluntary part he had taken in this unfortunate affair, as he called it. He thought he had but done his duty, and what was right in the premises. But he regretted his hastiness, and honestly wished that he had not judged so harshly. He now understood that Clare had been but a victim to her passionate, but truthful love, and that she had deceived her father from a sense of shame, so natural to a child. What was he to do now? He must go to N. again, and try what arrangements he could make, in behalf of that blind, helpless man, and the child. He could not go just now, because of a slight attack of gout.

A few days later, he took the boat for N. On his arrival at the cottage he learned from the servants in charge that Mr. Gray and the child had left, in company of a friend. Then, handing to the old gentleman a small casket and an envelope, containing the key to the former, said: "Mr. Gray left these to be delivered to you."

As to the whereabouts of Mr. Gray and the child, the servant could give no information.

On Reuben Van Alden's arrival at home, he opened the casket. It contained the title deed for "Villa Gray" and other gifts from Frank to Clare. The fact of this apprised the old gentleman that every advance on his part to befriend Mr. Gray would be met by the latter with disdain.

For the first time in his life he felt that he had made himself guilty of an act that placed him before a human being in an unfavorable, even hateful, light. Justly so, he thought. Yet he would gladly befriend that poor, grief-stricken father.

Ringing the bell, and a servant entering, he ordered him to send a messenger for Mr. Snelling, the head of a private detective agency.

On the latter's arrival, the old gentleman explained the interest he had taken in Mr. Gray and his grandchild, both having resided, until recently, in N. That they had left their abode, leaving no trace of their present whereabouts, and instructed the detective to leave nothing undone to find them, without their becoming aware of his endeavors.

The detective received the necessary information and instructions, jotting down elaborate memoranda.

The old aristocrat now seated himself before his writing-desk for the purpose of penning a letter to Frank.

He had barely written a few lines, when, ceasing suddenly, he tore them into fragments, muttering: No! I will not write! I have no doubt but what Frank merely acquiesced to the deception. I shall not be the harbinger of news that will inform him of his victim's death. It is done, and there is no help for it! Frank must square it with his conscience! No use my upbraiding him!" soliloquized he.

"The world is relentless to some and merciful to others," he mused. We all must take our share of what it brings, and must not shrink from duties imposed on us, because we

may thereby inflict pain on those who are blocking our paths. We must check the flow of bleeding hearts, if we can, and, if we do not, thereby open our own veins. I am willing to befriend that old man, so far as it lies in my power, and am ready to provide for the child; but I will not smite my own blood because it generated some impure drops.

Thus the aristocrat's conscience and character again compounded matters amicably. He felt satisfied that he had acted in the matter as his duty bade him.

An hour later he wended his way towards the Counting House to add, by his ingenuity, to the strength and lustre of the edifice.

CHAPTER XXV.

Martini, the blind artist, and Flora were met on their arrival in New York from N. by a friend, with whom Martini had arranged for a temporary abode.

Mrs. Somers received them cordially, her manner denoting a genuine sympathy for the bereaved father and child.

Tenderly embracing little Flora, she brought her into the presence of her own dear little ones. They soon succeeded in interesting the child, who could not as yet realize the loss it had sustained.

The sculptor and the blind artist had withdrawn to their adjoining apartments.

"My dear friend," said Martini, in a tender voice, "you must not succumb to despair. If you cannot transfer to me a duty, you say you owe to yourself; you must shake off the apathy that has taken possession of you. You know that my nature is soft. The passions swaying the human soul, I have learned to subdue. The fiery thirst to avenge her wrong, I must quench, because of the knowledge of your prior right. I know that the dumb brute even, with its animal instinct, will avenge itself upon the slayer of its offspring, and will turn mercilessly on its superior in strength to engage in an uneven combat, in which it is ready to sacrifice its life upon the altar of its brute affections.

"Oh, my friend," he continued, vehemently, "how I feel for, and with you. The chords of my heart feel every

touch that your body, bent in grief, and your helplessness, makes upon them. Let me once more beseech you to transfer to me the duty of revenge! You only to gloat in the knowledge that you will be avenged, terribly avenged, upon the slayer of your child! My hands are surer, my eyes intact, and my right—can you question my right? You, the only living being, whom I permitted to gaze into my heart and soul, must be aware of the love I bore Clare. If there is idolatry in a heart, it was in mine. The waters of the universe could not have quenched my love, nor flooded its holy fire.

"Have I relinquished winning a precious gem," he continued, fiercely, "that it may become but an appendage to lust? Have I resigned my holiest honor into his keeping to be brought before my gaze an object of shame, snapped of its life-strings, to be hidden in an untimely grave?"

"Upon manliness avenging brute force that had outraged womanly virtue, men and law wink with approval. Would not both approve my crushing the life of one, infinitely baser than the other? Of one who, with his good looks, his ingratiating, courtly manner and winning tongue (speaking of an undying love), beguiling thereby an innocent heart—and because of love and trust, robs her of more than her life—only to cast her off, a prey to shame and despair! His victim having a most potent right to be heard!"

"No human life," rejoined the blind artist, thoughtfully, "should be slain without a hearing, be the crime charged the foulest. Those taking it otherwise, commit an outrage against the Giver of it! 'T is, therefore," he continued,

with visible emotion, "that I must step before the slayer of my child and give him a hearing. Clare loved him well. To her memory I owe that duty. After I hear him, I, the father of his victim, will judge his guilt without bias. If he be guilty," he continued, in a stern voice, "to the full extent of my belief, I will pronounce judgment upon him, and will have no mercy. My conscience then will clear me from wrong. Should my arm fail me, and I need you and your eyes, you shall become both to me. This must content you, at least, for the present."

"It shall be then as you say," repeated Martini, resignedly.

The following day the sculptor met Jack Wilmot, from whom he ascertained Van Alden's absence from New York.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Todd, the constable, called upon Judge Brown, as prearranged.

Placing in his hands a list of some deserving poor, he pointed to the special case of a woman who had known better days, toiling now, and unable to take care of herself and child.

Expressing once more his thanks for a ten pound note received for a service he had gladly rendered, he left the room.

The following day, Helen, accompanied by the Judge, entered a dilapidated looking building situated in a narrow lane.

In a dingy room, upon a bed,—if it could deserve the name,—reclined a woman whose countenane bore traces of want and disease.

Her sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, pallid and shrivelled face, gave her the appearance of a woman of fifty, though her age was but thirty, as Helen later ascertained.

The room bore signs of the greatest poverty.

It contained, besides the bed, two chairs, a wooden box, serving apparently for a table, and a few dishes and pots.

On their entrance, the woman, who was dressed in a cotton wrapper, patched but tidy looking, rose to a sitting posture.

A hollow cough indicated a disease that may soon extinguish the flickering embers of her life.

Helen was greatly startled at her appearance, and at the same time surprised at the manner in which the woman expressed her welcome. Every word she uttered denoted her to be a woman who knew how to express herself well.

Deeply moved, she seated herself near the bed and said: "Mrs. Loring, I believe this to be your name,—Mr. Todd, who is known to you, gave us your address and spoke to us of your condition, and that you are deserving of the good will of your fellow beings. 'T is no shame to be poor," added Helen, noticing the woman's downcast looks; "the more so if we have not wilfully brought poverty upon ourselves. Please, do not consider our coming here merely a capricious object for charity. Having heard of your sorrow, we came to offer you friendly succor, which all of us, more or less, may need some time."

Mrs. Loring, who had listened to Helen's kind words, was visibly affected and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"You must not, indeed, you must not give way to such emotion," said Helen, greatly distressed. "I hope that my words have not opened the flood-gates of your grief. I came to close them, that is, if I can, and as far as I can, if you will let me."

Ere Helen could prevent it, Mrs. Loring grasped her hand, covering it with kisses, and in a voice still broken by sobs, said, "My dear, kind lady! my tears are flowing because of the kind sympathy you expressed; quite different from those, who, barely deigning me a look or kind word, offer me charity. You came for charity's sake," she continued, "and your proffered kind sympathy does me infinite good; more than money could; for you demonstrate to me

that there are yet some kind beings living—only that I am out of their pale; and oh! by my own—by my own acts, and because of the cruelty of those I loved," a fresh burst of tears and sobs here choked her voice.

Helen's interest and sympathy were now visably aroused. She felt sure that the poor invalid belonged to the unfortunate class of gentlewomen, whose own folly or cruel destiny often brings to the verge of misery and destitution and beyond the pale of their kin.

"Compose yourself, my good woman," she said, in a gentle tone, "be of good cheer. We will befriend you. You arouse a desire to know something of your past. I hope my assurance that it is not idle curiosity, will satisfy you as to my motive for intimating the same."

"Kind lady," rejoined the invalid, "I feel no reluctance to speak to you of my past." Looking now at the Judge, she asked, in a seemingly embarrassed manner, "Is the gentleman your husband?"

"No; Mrs. Loring," replied Helen, smiling at the Judge, who had seated himself beside her, "this is my uncle—to me, like a dear father."

"Mrs. Loring, gazing at Helen's lovely countenance, said, "I thought not. Summer and winter in one would produce a season in which a rare tender plant like yourself would thrive but poorly. Neither could winter be content to sacrifice to the behest of such a potent ray, like yourself, even if willing to bask in it during noon hours—nature's dormant, much needed repose."

"My dear Mrs. Loring," uttered Helen, with surprise depicted on her countenance, "you astonish me with your

diction! How could one like you have come to such surroundings?"

"You are, no doubt, aware," rejoined Mrs. Loring, "that the axis of our lives urges mostly in one direction—which is love. Alas! It often lands us in a dark abyss, terrible to dwell in, and from which egress is impossible, because of the many obstacles placed in our way."

"I have been well brought up," she continued. "My father was a prosperous merchant, and afforded me, his only child a good education. When about sixteen years of age I had the misfortune to lose my poor mother. Six months after her death father married again. My step-mother made no endeavors, nor did she care to win my love and confidence; I might have learned to care for her, at least, for father's sake, had she possessed the womanly tenderness her position towards me required.

"My father was always indulgent, although sparing in his demonstrations of affection. After his second marriage these ceased altogether, and resigned me entirely to the control of his wife. My home, which had been a happy one to the time of my mother's death, became less so now, mainly because of my step-mother's endeavor to subject me to her whims.

"My father was a man fifty-five years of age, and became himself a slave to the will of his young wife. He would often remonstrate with me because, as he said, of my ill behavior towards his dear wife; an ill behavior which consisted in not pleasing her caprices.

"I loved my father dearly and yearned to throw myself into his arms, and beseech him to love his only daughter, the

child of his once beloved wife, who, as I often had heard, looked her very image. His stern manner repelled any such attempt of mine.

"Later a cousin of my step-mother paid us a visit, and displeased me with his attentions. One day I was summoned to her presence and was informed that her cousin, Mr. Chisholm, wished to claim my hand in marriage. I replied, that as unlikely she herself would marry the gentleman, as unlikely would I. I knelt before my father, beseeching him not to urge me to disobedience—not to force me into a marriage with a man hateful to me. Father was inexorable, replying that if I intended to be disobedient, and knew better than he what would be to my welfare, I had better leave the home where I had shown so little love and respect, so little appreciation for their kind and loving interest.

"Two days later my trunks were packed and I was ready to leave the home of my childhood, never to return. My father would not even receive me to bid him farewell," she said, in a tremulous voice, vainly endeavoring to check the tears that were flooding her eyes.

"I journeyed to an aunt, a sister of my lamented mother, who lived in Yorkshire. She received me cordially and approved my having declined a marriage with a man whose very touch was repugnant to me, saying that father's cruel treatment would surely revert upon his own head. I placed my hand on her lips to prevent her uttering those words.

"The town in which my aunt resided, is a thriving manufacturing place. My fairly good looks, vivacity of youth, and my accomplishments in vocal and instrumental

music, soon made me a favorite in society, especially among young men. I became interested in a handsome, fascinating man, well connected; bookkeeper to a large woolen warehouse, who ultimately succeeded in winning my love.

"My attention had been drawn to his somewhat fast habits; that he would indulge occasionally in more liquor than was good for him. He promised never to touch a drop again. Prior to our marriage a lady friend, to whom Irwin had formerly paid some attention, hinted at a previous love affair of his. When mentioning this to him, he replied that he may have felt an affinity for a girl, but that such had long since ceased to exist, and that a past affinity does not preclude true love for a woman one is about to make his wife. This explanation sufficed a heart that loved dearly.

"We were ultimately married," continued Mrs. Loring. "There hardly could have existed a happier woman than myself. My husband was kind and loving. What more does woman desire? About three months after our marriage—my husband being absent on business—the servant entered my room, announcing that a young woman urgently wished to speak to me.

"The woman, or rather girl, for she did not seem older than eighteen, related to me her story.

"But I will not tire you with the details," remarked Mrs. Loring, "and will merely say that the girl belonged to poor but respectable people living in a town near Bradford, where she met my husband, who, after winning her love, betrayed her. She had only lately heard of his whereabouts and marriage, and had come to call him to account!

"Need I tell you how grieved I felt? and how I pitied

that poor girl? I wept like a child, and told her that I was not aware of her relationship towards my husband. That if by persecuting him she would be happier, I was willing to be miserable.

"My burning tears spoke of the anguish of my heart; they affected the poor girl visibly, for she sobbed herself. At last she said: 'No, Mrs. Loring! I will not be the instrument of wrecking your life because your husband wrecked mine. If I step between you, the result to myself could be at best only a greater degradation. My revenge I'll forego for your sake, and hope you will be happy.'

"Touched to the core, I sprang to my feet and clasped the girl to my heart, like I would an erring sister.

"Going to my desk, I took the money kept there for emergencies and handed it to her, saying: 'Take this, it may make you comfortable for a time at least.' She refused, saying that she would accept only sufficient to take her to London.

"The smallest of the notes being £5, I insisted on her taking at least that much.

"After tea I brought her to the station. On her departure I received her assurance that she would write to me, if in need of a friend.

"On my return home thoughts heaped themselves upon thoughts! I dreaded the future! My husband was guilty of an act that had no palliation, and should have no palliation in the mind of a good woman. He was guilty of an act which proved to me the baseness of his heart and mind, and in such hands I had staked my happiness!

"He loves me now. How long will he love me? 'T is

true he made me his wife. May he not tire of me? Such were the agonizing thoughts robbing me of my peace of mind.

"Two days later my husband returned home. I had resolved not to mention to him the subject preying on my mind. In his smiles and caresses I tried to cast from me all vague fears and doubts, thinking that he may not have loved that girl as he loves me.

"One morning I read in the newspaper the description of a young woman and child whose bodies had been found floating in the Thames, the child tied to the wrist of its mother. The paper stated that it was a sad case of suicide; that no trace of identity could be found upon them, only in a tiny box, tightly secured, a slip of paper was found, on which was written the following words: 'No happiness for me on earth. I seek oblivion of my misery in the embrace of the waters, ready to receive one repudiated by her fellow beings.'

"From the description, I recognized the identity of the poor girl my husband had so cruelly wronged. She had sought death, and not wishing to trust her child to the mercy of the world, had rendered its soul into the merciful keeping of the Father of mankind.

"My dear young lady," resumed Mrs. Loring after a pause, during which she seemed to collect her thoughts, "I tried my utmost to blot from my memory the dark spot in my husband's life, but the sad face of the suicide haunted me and marred his caresses. I would have despaired but for the dear little innocent that had come to cheer my life. In its sweet face I found a new world, and once more felt happy, until my husband's conduct changed.

"I must now be brief, for I cannot bear to dwell on the years of misery and despair that followed. He commenced to neglect me, then failed to support us. He soon became a bankrupt in pocket, body and soul. His old habits had returned to him. The man who could crush one woman's heart felt no scruples in crushing the heart of his wife, the mother of his offspring.

"I bore with all for the sake of my dear child, whose father he was—acquitting himself so ill of that name. Often when we had no food in the house, he would come home drunk, abusing and ill-treating me.

"Ultimately he had disposed of everything of value. In the end the landlord distrained for rent, and I and the child were put into the street. Since then I have heard nothing of him.

"The rest is soon told," she continued. "No longer able to eke out an existence by my own efforts, I was offered the charity of the work-house. I could not make up my mind to go there; no, my dear lady, we could not go there!" she burst forth in an agony of grief, the recollection of all these years of misery had called forth.

"My good woman," said Helen, who had listened with sympathetic interest to the invalid's sad narrative, "I sincerely regret that I have been the innocent cause of recalling to your memory the sad incidents in your life. Had I known its effect on you I would not have asked you to acquaint me with the same."

Mrs. Loring, who had now regained her composure, rejoined: "Set your mind at ease, dear lady; tears often alleviate a heavy heart."

"And your father, has he entirely forsaken you?" interrogated Helen.

"My father," rejoined Mrs. Loring, burying her face in her hands, "died suddenly a year after his marriage. He had disinherited me in favor of his wife, who soon after his death married her cousin, Mr. Chisholm, who, as I have been told, was a former admirer of hers. Ever since my father's untimely death," the invalid continued, "I could not forgive my aunt, for having hurled maledictions upon him. She, herself, is dead these many years."

The Judge, himself visibly affected, said in a soft, kind tone, "I disapprove of a woman remaining under the same roof with a man who is a knave, until he makes her homeless. I suppose it is woman-like," he added gently. "Your child, Mrs. Loring; has it not attained an age enabling it to take care of the parent?"

"My child is now ten years of age. He earns three shillings and six pence a week. I occasionally earn a few shillings by such work as I can do, when able. Thus we manage to keep the roof over our heads."

"You must not despair, Mrs. Loring," said the Judge, consolingly. "Judging from your narrative, you are yet a young woman. Your ailment may yet be arrested by care and nourishing food. Providence has sent to you friends who will not desert you. You must have no false pride," he continued, "but permit us to befriend you. The air in this room tells on me, even. We will leave you now and see you again as soon as you are removed to more healthy surroundings." Again bidding the invalid "Be of good cheer," the Judge and Helen left.

Half an hour later the grocer near by brought to the invalid some port wine and other immediate necessaries the Judge had ordered.

On their arrival at the hotel Helen penned Mr. Todd a postal, requesting him to call on the Judge at once.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Edinburgh, July 16th, 188–.

My Dear Friend.—I can scarcely believe my eyes when looking at this date. Barely five weeks from home, and sure enough, here we are in the metropolis of Scotland. Uncle is lolling and smoking a cigar, gazing at intervals through the telescope upon the shores of Fife and the Lemond hills from the window of our hotel, and I am sitting and penning these lines, occasionally impelled to gaze on the charming villages and cottages rising thickly from embowering shrubberies, which, between the northern part of Edinburgh and the sea, look like a continuous pleasure ground or garden. You, my dear friend, must not mind if such a lovely scene has even intervened with my pleasant occupation of communicating with you.

There! Now I have drawn the window blind to shut from my gaze the outside world. It will fit me better to pen to you my inner one and of my life for the past ten days.

During our two weeks' stay in London I spent some very pleasant, some really delightful hours and days. I felt a pang in bidding our many friends adieu. Mr. Van Alden remained in London. He will join us later in Perth. I miss him very much—ever so much. This confession of mine will apprise you that he has made considerable progress in my thoughts—and, I must say, in my heart. I miss his kind look, the gentle pressure of his hand when bidding

me good morn or good night, and his allusions of his tender regard for me.

I sometimes think that a heart which has learned to love, finding the sentinel common sense barring its outpour into the willing receptacle of the one responsive breast, is robbed of the joy, the ecstacy young love only is said to bring. You once told me that ecstacy in love often brings disappointment as its penalty, and related to me the penalty you yourself had paid. You then asked, which one outweighs the other. My answer then, is my answer now. The watchful sentinel within me is therefore a welcome intruder. Parental like, it beckons me to command a halt on the exuberance of my heart, and at the same time fondles it with the happy belief that its affection is not misplaced. This in itself fills my heart with joy.

Now, my dear friend, I will again revert to London. I have mentioned our rambles through some of the districts of the poor. Mr. Todd, our guide, gave us the names of a few deserving poor, pointing to the special case of a sick woman, unable to take care of herself and her child.

Uncle and I concluded to find her, and I will forever rejoice because of our impulse to see her. I cannot very well narrate her sad story. Her being a gentlewoman appealed the stronger to our sympathies. Her melancholy story touched me inexpressibly, the remembrance of which can hardly be effaced from memory. Uncle Bob made her comfortable, until we can take her and her son with us. Uncle has concluded to educate the boy—the fine lad that he is—who, with his scanty earnings, helps to maintain his mother. The physician says that if Mrs. Loring (this is the woman's

name) is removed to a milder climate, the removal may arrest the otherwise speedy termination of the malady. Will this not prove the romance of their lives?

You will be surprised that we ate a sixpenny dinner, or at least we paid that amount for one. I had a curiosity to know how the poor artisan and working people dine. We therefore entered a cook-shop (this is the name given in England to the humbler class of restaurants). No table-cloths, wooden tables, partitioned, to insure aristocratic privacy, or to prevent strife. Upon the table were salt cellar and pepper box. Dinner consisted of pea soup, brought in a large bowl, in which pepper, grease and mint played a conspicuous part. No other taste to it. Price 1*d.* (penny); roast mutton, thinly sliced, with two potatoes and greens, 4*d.*; boiled rice, meant for rice pudding, 1*d.*; bread extra.

I noticed the sturdy laborers eating their meals. By the clean plates left they demonstrated that they relished the quality, even if the quantity could not appease their hunger. My aristocratic palate, from the mere taste I took, found too much quantity and no quality.

I am told that amongst the middle and poorer classes the meals are cooked on the open grate upon the smoking coal cinders; that England is the paradise for lazy housekeepers; that the Sunday joint is large enough to do them for dinners until Wednesday, sliced cold, with potatoes and cabbage, and perhaps a dumpling for those affording that luxury, all prepared in a half hour before meal-time, the vegetables made palatable by salt and pepper. If any Englishman suffers from dyspepsia, such originates only from eating heavy dumplings and plum-puddings, for everything

else they eat is "nature undressed," seasoned by the addition of salt and pepper only.

As I had enough soft cushion riding, I wanted the opportunity to ride in one of the penny omnibuses I heard so much of. Uncle and I entered one and rode through the city toward Aldgate and Bow. There were about six passengers all told. A drenching rain brought others into the vehicle until all the places were taken. A woman, with a heavy bundle, instead of finding friendly room made for her, even at the expense of a few minutes' inconvenience to some of the passengers, was met with a shout of "there is no room for yon! no room! we will not be imposed upon." All this time she stood bent in a most painful attitude and must undoubtedly have been touched by very unpleasant emotions. I blushed with shame and burned with indignation, at the unmanliness of the men within. Uncle insisted on her taking his seat, which the poor woman accepted reluctantly. Uncle stood with body bent until we reached Aldgate. Two passengers alighting there, he resumed his seat. Men—I don't mean gentlemen—in England seem little disposed to be polite to women they know, much less to a poor woman they do not know.

I spent an evening with our banker's family. We were received with the most cordial friendliness. Our host was well informed and intelligent; he had traveled with his two daughters—such nice girls—on the continent, and had also visited our own country. We were entertained with some fine music. These girls did not play for silly effect upon the listener; no such thing! They proved themselves judicious amateur artists, greatly delighting their guests, quite

a number of them being present. What fine specimens of English girls they are. In the highest degree natural, gentle and easy in their manners, combined with such sweet tempers. I found myself more at ease there, than amongst many of the more aristocratic companies I met. I could have enjoyed the evening much better in company with the two girls, their father, Uncle and Frank included, only that some of the sedate city magnates, with their staid matrons and a few shy girls, threw a wet blanket over the buoyant spirits of those present.

Most Englishmen, as Mr. Van Alden explained, are too pious to be amused; some too fine. Religion with them is a grievous lever with which they crush attempted cheerfulness; a lever that dampens any attempt for hilarity, dreading that there must be something silly in being merry. I believe Mr. Van Alden to be right, for I noticed this in many instances.

Later in the evening Mr. Van Alden, the two girls and myself had a delightful chat. What pleasant voices they have with which to speak. If I were a man I could fall in love with their voices alone. Such girls would be charming to live with. They made no effort to display their cleverness, but were more ready to listen to the cleverness of others.

And now, my dear friend, I must close these lines. I will write to you soon again. Uncle sends his kindest regards. I expect a letter from you in Perth and hope it will be a long, a very lengthy one.

With an adieu, love and best wishes for you,

I remain yours, sincerely,

HELEN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Van Alden's days in London, intervening his joining Helen in Scotland, were partly spent in company with Archibald Lansing.

To the astonishment of that gentleman, the gay "American," as he called Van Alden, did not exhibit the zest he had expected of him after he (Archibald Lansing) had volunteered to lead him into the midst of the gay life London offers in the season.

Van Alden would join the *coteries* of the gay young people; flirt, reply with telling looks to the winsome smiles of the ladies, and with the code of usual phrases required on such occasions. He would walk, talk animatedly with a handsome girl; pay attention to her vivacious prattle; would whirl her through a waltz, eyed by all because of his manly grace, delighting thereby his fair partner, who felt conscious of being envied by her less fortunate sisters. The day over, he would return to his bachelor quarters dissatisfied with the manner in which he had spent it.

As much as our hero was steeped in the doctrines of selfish pleasures, in the sensuous school of life in which he had lived, he had not altogether a selfish heart. His experience with the world and the gentle sex had taught him but little reverence for either.

A man whom everybody flatters, and to whom everybody tries to be subservient, must presume upon all offering itself as a dutiful tribute to him, of which he will divest himself

with impunity after tiring of it, and look for new offerings that are flocking to him.

Helen had crossed his path and by her furtive glance had merely denoted a slight recognition of him, such as we cannot help showing an object that attracts us, and had passed on—not once turning her gaze to attract him in return.

It was not often that he met her like—and because of it, felt himself the more attracted.

The spell of her womanly grace was heightened each time he met her.

As he would sooner or later bring to his home a life-mate, he thought that Helen could befittingly grace his golden cage—if she would only content herself with that much and not exact too much of him otherwise.

As the reader is aware, he had concluded to apply himself to the task of winning her. Later he found that task not only a pleasant but a delightful one.

He had learned the sterling worth of her character, and she had imbued him within this short space of time with new thoughts, desires and objects in life.

After Helen had left for Scotland, leaving him free to return to the channels of his wonted gay life—to all that wealth and favor offered him, they had lost for him their former zest.

He now felt that he cared for Helen more than he thought he did and could, and that he had a heart to offer in return for hers, and not merely a golden cage, that would be no happy abode for one like her, unless she could find within it a love that can treasure her own.

Yes! He knew that he loved—not passionately, like his

boyish love had been, but truly. If she would only let him love her.

He felt a reverence for her purity of mind and character, and would endeavor to be worthy of the love she could bring him.

With such thoughts Van Alden left London to join Helen in Scotland.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Judge and Helen had visited the home of their ancestors and then journeyed through those parts of Scotland that were of most interest to them. Helen delighted in the Highland scenery, and all that is connected with its traditions, the poetry of Scottish history and literature; and pilgrimaged through many parts of the ancient kingdom by rail or water into Berwick-upon-Tweed, and into the border land; a country reputed to be the most religious, and the most moral in the world.

They journeyed through the most picturesque portions of Perth, Stirling, Dumbarton and Argylshire sea-lochs, and the many fine mountain groups. The approach to all these scenes lies through those lowland districts which abound in landscape beauty, and in historical and antiquarian interest.

Dundee, Perth, Stirling, Glasgow, with nearly all the palace towns and most of the cathedral cities of Southern Scotland, are included in the range, and are reached and explored in short journeys from Edinburgh.

They traveled through its mountain ranges and groups; the great estuaries, the passes and the lake scenery, including those sinuous arms of the sea, looking like inland lakes and land-locked narrow bays, which indent so much of the western coast, beginning with Loch-Ryan and extending northward to Loch-Assynt. How much of the romantic, the wild and grand is included in this one feature!

Though the Scottish blood-drops about my heart caught

the glow of the northern slopes of the Cheviot and the silver Tweed, Helen had written to Mrs. Loewenhaupt, there was, to tell the truth, little landscape beauty to admire from the time we crossed the Scottish border at Berwick until we approached Edinburgh; but I felt interested in the many old seats of the nobility and gentry. Uncle was enraptured with the husbandry and tillage, with hedgerows and substantial enclosures. Then came the brown heathery range of those desolate Lamermoors—fit scenes of the deepest tragedy that ever was imagined by creative genius.

I am an admirer of Highland scenery, but love mostly that connected with the traditions, the poetry, history and literature of Scotland, and will therefore mention only a few of the latter. Of the many charming objects which our travels unfolded, and in which I was very much interested is Neddry Castle, once the stronghold of the Setons, to which Queen Mary fled upon escaping from Loch-Leven; then near Fallkirk, the palace of Linlithgow. It is closely neighbored by an old church which, I was amused to hear, an unreformed magistrate had whitewashed to prevent it from taking the cholera. Here Mary Queen of Scots was born. Here also was the Regent Murrey shot from a window in the principal street; and there are many more lions in the ancient borough which was once a famous locality in the royal annals of Scotland and which will live forever in the poetry of Sir Walter Scott.

From the castle hill of Stirling, I looked over the broad fertile strath of Forth, through which we passed, and the fair realms of Monteith, with their girdling mountains opening wide before us. I sat me down on the ladies' hill,

overlooking the ancient tournament ground, and conjured up before me the days of chivalry, and thought how much we have gained in the homely comforts and security of life, against what we have lost in the grace and spirit of life.

Uncle provokingly remarked, that, but for our present age as it is, there would have been no chance for a Yankee girl ever seeing this enchanting country.

The vale of Devon possesses a character unique in Scottish scenery. It has been called the Temple of Scotland.

We left Stirling for Kinross, then for Dollar, where we ascended to castle Campbell.

We gave nearly the whole day to the castle, the falls of Devon, named the "Caldron Linn and Rambling-Brig."

We visited Ardvoirlich, the residence of that family of Stewarts whose traditions as uncle informed me, are embodied in the legend of Montrose.

It has been a busy time, with rambling and climbing, touring and detouring. I have no hope of giving you the faintest idea of the surpassing loveliness and variety in river, lakelet and woodlands, Alps on Alps towering in the distance. I cast loving eyes on many sweet spots where one might dream away a summer in intimate communion and fellowship with nature, and in happy oblivion of this busy, unquiet work-a-day world. Such scenes have been painted to me as existing, and had kindled my imagination; and I have longed for the wings of a dove to fly away and see them all. And now, having seen them all, my pen cannot adequately describe the delight these glimpses have brought me.

CHAPTER XXX.

After two weeks' travel Helen and her uncle returned to Perth. According to previous arrangements, they paid their cousin, Squire McLane—who owned an estate near this ancient town—a visit.

The estate, a handsome mansion built in the midst of beautiful grounds, but without the park scenes of English domains, surrounded by fine plantations, spacious level fields, consisting of fifty acres or more—each fenced by lofty, impenetrable, quick hedges—the farm houses fine models of what they should be according to Englishmen's tastes, where substance, not shadow, is the criterion of beauty—seemed a delightful abode to Helen's gaze, as she approached its environ.

The spirited horses driven by young McLane—who had come to the station to meet them—approaching the portals of the mansion, stopped suddenly, aware that they had reached their journey's end, and were willing that their master's honored guests should first alight and enter its hospitable doors before they approach their own abode, seen from the distance, and inviting them to a sumptuous repast of "Scottish oats and fragrant clover."

Young McLane, a youth about seventeen years of age, assisted Helen to alight.

Mrs. McLane, a portly lady, greeted the guests cordially, and, leading them into a spacious drawing-room, said, apologetically: "My husband sends his excuses; he will return

in time for dinner. You must be tired and dusty, dear Helen, and will need an hour's rest and a brush," she added, kindly. "Mrs. Muir, the housekeeper, will show you and Cousin Robert to your rooms. I hope you will find them comfortable and feel at home in them."

The apartments Helen was led into consisted of a bed and sitting-room adjoining, and were furnished with everything that could contribute to the comfort of the occupant.

The fragrance of flowers placed in large, handsome vases greeted her entrance. A caged finch warbled its sweet notes of welcome to her.

Helen, delighted with the rooms, felt at once homelike in them.

Two hours later our travelers were seated at dinner. The ride and the pure air had quickened their appetites, and they did ample justice to the repast set before them, which was spiced by the humorous conversation of the Squire, and the merry chatter of his children, the youth previously mentioned, and a girl about fifteen years of age.

Dinner over, the Squire proposed a game of whist to the Judge, and to the young folks a stroll through the grounds.

The hall stood open to the summer night. The air was full of sweetness.

"Yes," said Helen, "it is too lovely out doors to stay in."

It was a delightful romp in the moonlight night. The pathway as bright as twilight.

"Cousin Helen," remarked young McLane, "I have been told that girls in the States are lean and lanky-looking because of their eating so much sweet stuff and sitting all day long in rockers, as father calls those hobby horse like chairs.

Really, cousin, I must say that you don't look like that at all. I suppose your being of Scottish descent makes the difference. So much the better for your looks," he added, gazing at her admiringly.

"How old are you, cousin?" he asked, after a pause.

"This is a question you should not ask of a lady," replied Helen, archly. "Being a cousin, you are somewhat privileged, and I will therefore entrust you with the secret of my age, if you promise not to tell any tales," she added, in a playful tone. "I will soon arrive at the mature age of twenty-one."

The youth, after a moment's thoughtful silence, rejoined in a regretful tone, "No! It won't do! I could not even dream of marrying a girl so much older than myself. I wish you were but fifteen," he added, with a sigh, "so that when I become of age and ready to marry, you'd be the younger of the two."

Helen's merry, silvery laughter because of the regretful tone with which her rustic admirer had spoken, rang through the stillness of the night.

At last she rejoined, "If you really cared for me, cousin, you would have me, even if older than yourself, should I be content to wait until then. And why would you not marry a girl older than yourself? Would she not be better fitted to take care of one who needs yet to be taken care of at that age," she asked, mischievously.

"Because women get old sooner than men, and wrinkled," he replied, in a serious tone, "and then we can't help taking a fancy to a prettier and younger woman and run away with her; like Squire Hodgson's son has, lately.

I really would not like to make myself guilty of such an act and treat a woman so shamefully."

"You are a good lad, cousin McLane," rejoined Helen. That's quite proper; never marry a girl older than yourself, even if it robs me of a chance with you. I hope at least that you will always reserve for me a cousinly feeling. Should you ever visit us in the States, I will disabuse your mind and introduce you to lots of Yankee girls younger than yourself, who, in spite of sweets and rockers, are really fine loooking."

Thus they chatted gayly, strolling for over an hour in the grounds.

The following day Helen and young McLane were walking along the path leading through the verdant meadows, towards the village, a short distance from the Squire's mansion.

Her dress, a gray colored walking suit, though made of inexpensive material, was a lovely costume; everything about it charmingly becoming her graceful figure. Her attire seemed in keeping with the glory of the afternoon.

A locomotive in the distance gave the signal of its approaching the station, which was about two miles from the village.

Helen looked wistfully in the direction of the train as it whirled past. Her face flushed slightly at the thought that Van Alden might be one of the passengers.

She had received several missives from him. In his last he had mentioned that he was about to leave London for Perth, to join her there. Helen had informed him of her leaving on a visit to Squire McLane, where she would be

pleased to meet him, assuring him of the Squire's cordial welcome.

"Is it a cousin of your's only that is coming, or is he our cousin as well?" inquired young McLane. "How you blush!" he ejaculated, noticing her rising color. "In your tell-tale face I can read that I would have no chance with you; a girl who blushes when spoken to about a fellow is pretty far gone on him. You might have told me as much last night," he continued, in a petulant tone, "and thereby have saved me many sleepless hours, in which I argued with myself that you might be an exception to the rule. I have read," he resumed, after a moments silence, "that some women carry their age well; in fact never look real old, and I had made up my mind to propose to you when of age. It is all over now," he added, in a regretful manner.

Helen, amused at the manner and tone her boyish cousin had revealed to her his intended proposal when of age, rejoined playfully, "You surely don't expect a young lady to rely on an intended future proposal? I believe in the adage, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' I could only accept an immediate proposal, and only from a gentleman of age. Uncle informed me that minors are disqualified by law to make a valid contract," she added, laughing merrily.

"You are like all other girls—not a bit better—eager to get married," rejoined the youth, in a tone indicating vexation.

"The gentleman coming," he resumed, after a pause, "do you expect him to propose to you? You may confide in me, cousin," he added, in a confidential manner, "for I

am no tell-tale fellow, and like to be made a confidante of—particularly in love affairs."

"Why, Cousin McLane, you astonish me with your acute guessing powers," rejoined Helen, archly. "This time you have missed the mark. Having assured me that you are no tell-tale fellow, I will confide in you, and inform you that the gentleman coming is the lover of a young friend of mine, whose cruel father forbade her listening to his love-making. Neither must she write to him, nor receive his letters. Both made me their confidante and the medium of their correspondence. He is coming for her letters, and I am to inclose his in mine."

"Cousin Helen!" he exclaimed, "I never thought that you could tell a fib. Would not the postage be cheaper than his coming all the way from Yankeedom?" he asked.

"What a dunce he must be, if what you say could be true! Surely, a girl like you would have nothing in common with such a fellow. You are clever, cousin, but not clever enough to impose on me such a story. Anyhow," he continued, in a patronizing tone, "you need have no fear, for I will not let the cat out of the bag."

"Young gentleman," rejoined Helen, "if you cannot believe my word, I will never again make of you a confidante."

They had now entered the village.

At the postoffice young McLane received the mail addressed to the mansion.

"Here is a letter for you, cousin," he said, handing the same to her.

Helen, recognizing the handwriting as that of Mrs. Loewenhaupt, placed the missive in her pocket.

They now retraced their steps homewards. On reaching the foot-path leading through the meadow, they caught the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps.

Both turned their heads in the direction from whence the sound came.

Helen recognized the approaching figure to be that of Van Alden.

Her heart fluttered; she felt the color rising to her face, but she cared not if he noticed its glow.

They halted, waiting the gentleman's approach.

A few seconds more and Van Alden stood by her side.

"How you have startled me, Mr. Van Alden," she exclaimed, after greetings and introduction were over. "How came you to be a foot passenger in these regions?"

"I reached the village in a cab. Espying you, I ordered the driver to bring my baggage to the Squire's mansion, and followed your trail. Here I am! I hope that you, Miss Powell, and Mr. McLane, do not mind taking me along," rejoined Van Alden, cautiously.

The youth, with his gaze riveted on the new-comer, bowed politely in acquiescence.

Helen having accepted Van Alden's proffered arm, the trio wended their way homewards, engaging in a general conversation.

The graceful form of the girl, and the stately-looking man, as they walked side by side, looked a pair destined to find wedded bliss and happiness in each other.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The days spent in their rural retreat were to Helen by far more delightful than the many she had passed under the irksome restraint of social nothingness and etiquette.

The home circle, enhanced by the consciousness of Van Alden's presence, helped to stimulate the natural buoyancy of Helen's spirit. She gradually became as frolicsome as her young cousins, and readily joined in all their youthful pranks.

Even Van Alden caught the infection and soon became a part of the gay party—joining them even in their game of "blind man's buff."

How deftly Helen would evade his touch. Her joyous laughter, with its silvery tones, betraying her whereabouts; he would strain his neck to get, if possible, a faint outline of her position, and then rush towards the spot.

For his pains he would catch Rachel's skirt, and, recognizing its owner, would quickly loosen it, and continue the chase after the prize.

Young McLane's gentle,' mischievous push, had landed Helen into the blindfolded gentleman's arms, who, contenting himself with holding her but a second, blind-folded her in return.

"How you have surprised me," said Van Alden to Helen later in the evening, whilst strolling in the grounds. "I never dreamed there was so much mirth in you. I beheld you this evening in a new role—a more charming and

pleasing one you could scarcely have assumed. You succeeded in bringing me back to my own boyish years, which, until this evening, I had deemed impossible."

"I must confess to surprise at myself," rejoined Helen. "Those two youngsters made me nigh forget that I have outgrown their years. I will acknowledge that I followed in their wake with more zest than your presence would have warranted. Really, Mr. Van Alden, I could not resist the spell of joyousness that overcame me, and knowing that I am among dear friends (gazing at him with a winsome look, as she said this) I followed the impulse of the hour which may never return. How I delighted entering into my school girl's gambols and frolics!" she exclaimed; "and when I noticed your infection, my girlish spirit knew no bounds.

"So long as I am under this roof I will try to be the rustic girl, and will feel the better for it; if I do not thereby incur your displeasure, for I seriously think of pleasing you," she added, with a deep blush mantling her cheeks. "Your conduct this evening deserves recognition. The next time we play blind man's buff," she went on, playfully, "I will grant you—provided you seize me, and I am not pushed into your arms to hold me for two seconds instead of one—but no longer—I seriously mean it," she added mischievously.

"And should I not be able to resist the temptation to clasp you to my heart for a longer time than you stipulate?" asked Van Alden, with a most tender enunciation.

"Then you shall seize me but once during the game," replied Helen archly.

The company had separated for the night. Helen had sought the privacy of her room. Bringing forth the letter she had received a few days previously from Mrs. Loewenhaupt, she again perused the contents, which ran as follows:

Your letters dated Liverpool and London, bringing me glad tidings of your precious self, have been received and I have not tarried in my reply. I hope that these few lines will find you at your address in Perth. I have perused your letters with the greatest interest.

From your description I have no doubt that Mr. Van Alden must be the beau ideal of a young woman. You write me that he has obtained a strong hold upon your womanly fancy. All I can say to you on this matter is, that you have approached the momentous epoch of your life, where a woman's greatest happiness is obtained when she has found one on whom she may lavish the wealth of her love, which she is prepared to give and receive.

To you, my dear Helen, it is a state of awful import, into which you must enter with forethought, because it will fill your whole future life. You may be happy now, but most happy or most miserable you will be as a wife. Remember dear, to be happy in marriage life, you must have a soul-mate as well as a house and help-mate. You must only choose one whom you can honestly love, honor and respect. You must have sufficient opportunity and observation, and must be confident of this, if your marriage shall not be a mockery. Unless you intend marrying for profit and convenience only, satisfied with life in a temperature of indifference or mere liking; to eating, drinking and sleeping,

thus rejecting all higher attractions, and sinking into a state of mere animal existence.

Wealth, my dear, is not necessary to ensure felicity; indeed, it often tends to disrupt it; nor is poverty conducive to happiness; competency, I believe suffices. After this more depends on the character, disposition and temper than on personal or intellectual advantages.

The best wine is spoiled by a drop of bitters, and a bad temper or mean disposition has the same effect upon your life, which is mostly made up, not so much of duties and sacrifices, as of trifling things, in which the sunny smile and kind word preserves the heart and secures repose.

From your letter I am confident that you have met your fate. My own individual prayers, if they can bring you the happiness you so well deserve, will make you happy indeed.

On your return I will undoubtedly have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Van Alden. I will then tell him that you are worthy of the purest love man can give to woman. You may express to the gentleman my kindest regards; likewise to your dear uncle.

With my best wishes,

Your loving friend,

EMILY.

After reading her letter Helen seated herself at the open window, inhaling the fragrant perfume with which the flowers scented the night air. The cooling breeze relieved her throbbing temples, occasioned by the revelation this day had brought to her.

On her hitherto peaceful, uneventful and happy journey

through her young life, she had approached the enchanted valley of woman's wonderful vision. On its borders stood her stately beloved pilgrim, beckoning her to share with him an elysium of earthly bliss.

Her gaze is spellbound by the vista opening resplendent before her. Her heart shouts, because of the happiness that awaits her there—only that she is told to heed and scan her pilgrim's strength, to ascertain if she can trust him to carry her safely through that valley.

The ethereal heavens smile upon her thoughtful countenance. The purity of her thoughts and heart return the gaze.

This day had brought her the certainty that Van Alden possessed her virgin heart in its entirety. He must be worthy of it, or else how could she have offered it at his shrine. She has not tried woman's handicraft to impel him towards her; the art that wins but to lose.

If he plied his to win her through a manly love that sanctified his wooing, and if his love has urged her heart sensible to its touch, and from a lofty behest of nature to respond, must she resist the happiness?

He, to whose honest wooing every threshold stands ajar, has sought the threshold of her heart, and because he thought her worthy, should she doubt his worthiness and stifle the pulsations of her heart that yearns to rest on his?

She must love, honor and respect? Does she not honor and respect him because of her love?

This last thought brought to her face the happy repose that had rested upon it after Van Alden had bid her good night.

Her thoughts were full of her lover, and prevented the slumber she had sought. This time the handsome fellow's vision was a welcome one.

Helen rose early in the morning, and, after completing her toilet, descended to the drawing-room. This was a large, pleasant apartment, furnished in modern style; with handsome mirrors and fine paintings adorning the walls. The windows ajar permitted a full view into the garden, luxuriant and brilliant in the rays of the morning sun.

She was dressed in white muslin; that blended well with her youthfulness. There was a serene calmness in her look, and her eyes, soft and tender, gazed upon the outstretched landscape varying in beauty, all of which spoke of the Omnipotence of our Creator.

She seated herself upon the sofa, and read from a volume she had brought with her, the poetry being legibly reflected on her countenance, that looked radiant.

Van Alden entered unobserved and beheld Helen seated, with her beautiful feet, encased with daintiest slippers, resting on a cushion. Our hero would have given the world could he have kissed those little feet.

A deep flush had o'erspread Helen's face on becoming aware of Van Alden's presence, and that his eyes were resting upon her in mute admiration.

Smiling sweetly, she said: "I hope, my Chevalier (*sans peur**) that you are not afraid to approach. Come and be seated! I am a real being, and no vision."

"I am a Chevalier *sans couer*,† as a certain young lady

* Without fear.

† Without a heart.

must be aware," said Van Alden, seating himself next to her.

"Is that certain young lady aware that you are a gentleman, heartless? And has she possessed herself of it, without making amends? Indeed, she must be heartless!" rejoined Helen.

"Yes, very heartless, somewhat like yourself," replied Van Alden.

"We women all are heartless in the estimation of men, if we close our ears to their love-making longer than agreeable to them," rejoined Helen. "I am told that it hurts your vanity, if we try to withstand your fierce onslaught upon our affections, and that you accuse us of coquetry, cruelty and Heaven knows of what else. 'T is strange, that, judging us so harshly, your love should grow in volume with the resistance you find. We know this to be the fact, and naturally it stimulates our resisting power; for we desire the whole volume of your affection. This is a laudable, I may say a noble purpose of ours—a purpose that should meet with your hearty approval, instead of your derision."

"I am amazed at your revelation," rejoined Van Alden in a humorous vein. "How ill we have judged you, calumniated you, called you heartless and Heaven knows what else. And all this abuse because of your laudable intent to stimulate our sluggish hearts. The wretches we are to raise our voices; even if we must wince under the torture you apply."

"Do we really thereby torture you?" she interrogated in a tone of raillery. "The knowledge of this inclines me to

a belief, that we are inhuman. We had better surrender our hearts to your first onslaught. If your conquest so easily attained depreciate our value, we only plague our own hearts by our own acts, and you are innocent in the matter, and cannot be blamed."

"My Chevalier without a heart?" she continued, gazing at him lovingly. "Do you really suffer? You must let me gaze fully into your face, that I may read in it the full extent of the torture; my diagnosis may enable me to apply the proper remedies to allay the pain. It is the same handsome face I first beheld in Morganville," she resumed, "somewhat more serene, naturally it should be thus—considering the more mature age you have arrived at since. 'T is your eyes that speak of an abnormal state. How lustrous they are! Their brilliancy denotes an ailment—a fit of love! A serious one at that!" she added, archly. "Yes, you need a remedy that will at least allay the feverish uncertainty. My Esculapian knowledge in such cases being limited, I must first consult authorities in the matter before I prescribe."

"Why not consult the patient himself, dear Helen," rejoined Van Alden in a tender voice. "Is he not the best authority in such matters?"

Helen felt that her attempt at raillery had not succeeded. She felt that her face must be to him like an open mirror, in which he could distinctly read the awakening of her womanhood, the blossoming of her heart, the unfolding of her young life. She met his gaze, and it penetrated her innermost soul. She could not help if her eyes shone bright and loving upon his face; that her cheeks glowed in crim-

son. He held her hand in his, and she could not prevent its tremor. She felt she would like to say, "I love!" But she seemed to shrink from words that could only satisfy her heart with the sensation of his presence.

The blissful silence was at last broken by Van Alden, who asked: "My darling Helen, what changes the wilderness of the heart into an Eden?"

Helen blushed, and did not answer at once.

Van Alden, aware that she understood the question, asked: "Why not answer me, dear? Must I be the interpreter of your thoughts? Is it"—

"Love!" whispered Helen, softly.

"Yes!" 'T is love!" exclaimed Van Alden, rapturously. "Is not love beautiful? And you, who are so beautiful, can you comprehend the love you inspire?"

"Love engendered by the beauty of the person,— a transitory, perishable substance—is it not a flimsy foundation upon which to build the felicities of life?" rejoined Helen, looking serene and thoughtful.

"And what would you love?" interrogated Van Alden, "The mind, the character? Love," he continued, "is an enchantment created by the beauty of a thing not in our possession, which we desire to appropriate, to possess ourselves. For what purpose? For the delectation of our eyes, first; the heart and mind, afterwards. I spoke of the eyes first, because of their susceptibility for the beautiful only. Our eyes, will they not pass by all other objects unmoved, be they even of the greatest merit for quality? The mind; quality of character brought to our special notice may awaken honor and respect; association with the

possessor of them, may engender our appreciation, even our affection; but never love! the great love I love you with," he exclaimed, clasping her lovingly in his embrace. "We fondle what we love," he resumed, tenderly. "Could we fondle deformity, full to the brim even of the noblest traits?

"That the mind is an ennobling possession, I do not deny; but is it a greater blessing than beauty? I think not. Those who have both (looking into her face significantly), who are doubly gifted, know not to answer the question. They are beloved, and are conscious of the result, but cannot dive into the mystery, in the fountain from which love sprung. Love only is the poetry of life; affection but its prose."

"I must confess," rejoined Helen, "that the emotions of the heart are incomprehensible. I feel that I cannot withstand its omnipotent behest. All this fills me with an awe, of which I am unable to divest myself. Gazing into your dear face, I feel that I am not insensate,"—Helen paused suddenly. Her face and neck were dyed with a crimson hue; bending her head forward, she laid it upon Van Alden's shoulder, trying in vain to check the tears of happiness from gushing forth.

"Heaven bless you, my sweet, my darling Helen!" exclaimed Van Alden, encircling her trembling waist with an arm scarcely less tremulous. Their first long, passionate kiss spoke of the intensity of their love.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Squire McLane was, as we would call him, a sporting associate. His greatest delight consisted in coursing; and if anyone beat his favorite greyhounds, the victor was sure to be pressed to dinner.

He was an out-of-the-way man, such as one does not often meet. Though rough in his exterior, he had a polished mind.

He was a compound of contradictions; he would talk of persons of rank with contempt, and be flattered by any approaches they made to an acquaintance with him; he affected to despise learning, while it was evident he had sedulously cultivated it.

He dressed carelessly, whilst his servants, even, had to pay scrupulous care to their attire. He was a man of good fortune, farming most of his estate himself. Few persons could do it better.

He was a kind master to his laborers, a considerate landlord to his tenants, who looked to him as a friend. A most generous host, jovial, and, therefore, a delightful companion to the Judge and Van Alden.

Mrs. McLane was a gentle, subdued lady, who spoke little; having surrendered her opinion to her husband long ago. She was kind, and impressed all with her motherly kindness and attention.

Helen could not fail to enjoy her sojourn under such an hospitable roof, the abode in which she had plighted her

troth, and in which she spent the first days of that blissful life. These almost idyllic days were to Helen full of great happiness. During Van Alden's absence on sport with the Squire and the Judge, she would stroll with her young cousins, jump hedges, try the speed of her feet with theirs.

Guests being invited, evening enjoyments would alternate with games, dancing and music; and, the day over, she would retire to rest in a happy state of mind, feeling thankful to the Giver of all good, and awake in the morning with emotions of pleasure and delight, because of another happy day coming.

Van Alden and Helen both were crossing the meadows, which led towards the trout stream in the not far distance. The meadows were white with daisies, those stars of earth, twinkling in the grass. Soon they approached the winding stream. The trout were rising in every direction, while moor-hens were silently stealing away to their hidden retreats, and willow-wrens and sedge-birds gave their notes of alarm.

How charming are the banks of a trout stream, thought Helen. Here and there old willow pollards bent over the stream, upon which the flies settled, and dropping upon the water are seized by the trout which harbor among the decaying roots of the tree.

The river derived its force from the mountain torrent which brawls and foams amongst the rocks; and the obstruction it meets reminding one of the violent passion of man. A clear, placid and unruffled stream, on the contrary, is a fit resemblance of those who, pursuing the even tenor of their way, fall gently into the ocean of life, undisturbed

by bad passion and unsullied by mixing with the turbid waters of the world.

They now ascended the highest elevation that perched down upon the river below. To climb the pathway, a steep incline, rugged in some places, required a steady gait. Helen's agility astonished her lover. The view was far-reaching and beautiful. The valley below, with the crystal stream. Beyond, the cultivated fields, as far as their eyes could reach; the pastures full with grazing cattle, moving hither and thither. The farm houses dotting the plain were at their feet; and upon all the sun shone in glorious refulgence.

This was a still life before them. The blooming fields and green woods in the distance was a picture that entranced the eye, and brought to the mind an inner life.

The acute mind of the sceptic, Van Alden, was softened by the view of nature's sublime work—by the sweet songs of the birds, the fragrance of the pines, and by all the thousand delights nature presents in appealing to the senses of man.

Both were seated, shaded from the burning sun by the thick branches covered with summer folliage overhanging their heads. Involuntarily his thoughts were directed to the existence and the attributes of our Creator—by reflecting on the beauty and variety of his works. How different were his thoughts from those which had occupied his mind in the crowded city, so full of life—the life he loved. He felt that there was an omnipotent, benevolent cause for all he saw, that there are objects in men's lives—nobler ones than the mere pursuits of daily enjoyments, in which the

eye and senses participate, leaving the heart untouched; objects which should bring to our later, maturer life the consciousness of having acquitted ourselves honestly of our mission in this world.

Van Alden gazed on that lovely being seated by his side, her queenly head resting on his shoulder, with her gaze returning his inquiringly, because of his thoughtful silence. A being, ready to entwine her life with his own, to belong to him in body and soul, joyfully offering him the felicity she brings, and looking to him for her own. He searched within the most innermost recesses of his heart and soul for any impure speck that could make him unworthy of her gifts, so that he may cast to the winds what there may be left of his former self.

Clasping her to his heart, he exclaimed tenderly: "My beloved, my darling Helen! You seek my thoughts. They are not to you the mirror that yours are to me. Men are like a craft tossed upon the waves of life; they receive dents and scratches, and become soiled by the slime stagnating in the shallow waters on which they glide. Woman's love must lead them into calmer and purer waters, and thereby restore their staunchness and brightness. Your love, dear Helen, has accomplished this with me, and I only await your piloting me towards a harbor where you shall reign as my queen."

"And where I shall pay dutiful homage to my king," replied Helen, softly, "and to whom, on his return from the cares of State, I will bid a welcome with my smiles, which are, as you would make me believe, the sunshine you love to bask in."

"Oh, my darling! My darling!" she suddenly burst forth, "my smiles—will they always be to you the same? If the eye is susceptible to the beautiful only, and that magnet fails—what then?" she asked, gazing wistfully into his face.

"Then the passionate love of youth will be replaced by the mellowed and more intensified love of mature years," rejoined Van Alden, imprinting a tender kiss upon her lips.

The kiss and his loving words reassured her heart.

Lovers' unison of heart and soul produce colored visions of a future life, based upon their present feelings. Could they base one upon a permanent scheme that the future may not destroy?

Helen knew that the world is not a palace in which lovers glide smoothly through life.

Poetry and romance were with her things noble, beautiful—but only to dream about. The everyday working of human life sufficed her. She preferred the noble mind of stern reality to the morbid elegance of an imaginative soul producing less poetical results. To Van Alden she attributed the quality of mind she loved in man. He had turned his helm to her, that she should pilot it into a channel of happiness. She felt that she could lead him there, and she accepted the trust joyfully.

The last few weeks had carried Helen upon a stream whose swift current she could not resist, and upon which she had glided nearer the floodgates that draw everything within their reach.

Her life now was full of happiness. The love that had

drawn her to Van Alden was little less than an idolizing sentiment that, if disenchantment should be her lot, must bring to her untold misery.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The October sun shone brightly upon New York. The foliage in Central Park had changed into golden hues, which were decorating its avenues and foot paths. The fresh wind blowing from the northwest tossed them into the air and sent them prancing along the roads that were traversed by a few pedestrians only.

On one of the foot-paths the blind artist paced thoughtfully to and fro—his daily exercise, that should help to mend his failing health. He had nigh succumbed to the terrible blow that had struck his declining years.

The months following his great and sudden bereavement dragged their slow length along. The days were joyless to him, and but for the consciousness of a duty awaiting him, he would not have cared to resist the onslaught upon a life that had lost all zest, and was but a burden. He yearned to join his beloved child in those regions where it is said they need never separate.

"I think the hour draws nigh to return home," he said, feebly, addressing his attendant, adding, "I feel somewhat tired."

His bent form and venerable appearance, the vacant gaze of his eyes, and the sad expression of his face stirred the sympathetic look of the passer-by.

On reaching his home, he found Martini awaiting him, an unusual occurrence at that time of day—as he thought—that must have some import.

"My dear friend," the sculptor addressed him; "I am the bearer of news, such as you have been patiently waiting for. Van Alden has returned from abroad. I read of his return in this morning's paper. They announce his betrothal to a beautiful young lady."

The blind artist seemed startled.

"I will read to you the particulars, if you wish to hear them," resumed Martini.

The blind artist nodding his assent, the former read as follows:

"Mr. Frank Van Alden, the junior partner of the well-known banking house of Van Alden & Co., who has been abroad for the past few months, has returned. We are authorized to announce the gentleman's engagement to Miss Helen Powell, the beautiful and accomplished niece of Judge Brown, of Morganville. The nuptials will be solemnized in the month of December. We congratulate the happy pair and wish them felicity."

The tidings of Van Alden's return had brought a sad smile of satisfaction to the blind artist's face, which had now changed into a stern expression.

"Is she more beautiful and accomplished than my poor child has been?" he muttered. "No! a thousand times no!" he vociferated. "Only that his affianced enjoys the prerogative of wealth, and therefore caste. She is not the poor girl whose heart and trust he could rob with impunity!" he exclaimed bitterly; "therefore he bargains for her with his name. Only in betraying and crushing Clare, he failed to count the cost to himself."

After a moment's reflection, he resumed: "A thought dawns within my mind, worth its weight in gold. Let me gather my senses. Yes, yes!" A wild joy overspread his face, as he continued: "A passion has taken possession of that man, that if thwarted must kindle a fierce tempest in his heart, and bring to him the bitter, galling drops with which he had delectated his victim.

"I would rather torture him than take his life! Where does this young woman live?" he asked the sculptor. "Discover her whereabouts, then bring me to her, and I will—No, no!" he murmured thoughtfully. "Stab her, too? Because she succumbed to his seductive arts, that made even a victim of my poor, poor child! And yet—I must wound her! Only the wound I must inflict shall carry with it healing balm. The noble traits, the belief in the worthiness of a man are the prime incentives that win the honest love of an honest woman," he soliloquized. "Rob the lover of the mask that covers his hideousness, and his true apparition will stun her, 't is true, but likewise undermine the very foundation her love is built upon, and be to her the source of thankfulness for having escaped an impending doom.

Yes! Thus it shall be! I will meet her and warn her of the viper she has taken to her bosom—a viper that will sting her to death, her charms once relaxing their hold upon it."

"Should she be worldly—akin to his heart—and cares not for his past love intrigues (such she may call them), neither for a broken heart that is not her own, deride and scorn a sympathy she has not sought, and proudly answers

that she is to be his wife and not his mistress?" asked Martini, trembling with agitation as he spoke.

"She shall then learn that my scorn rests upon her likewise, and my hands shall be the better steeled to avenge my child's honor!" replied the blind artist fiercely.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

On Van Alden's return to New York he had learned of Clare's death. He felt bewildered; it was not the result he had anticipated. His uncle related to him all the circumstances connected with her sad end.

Frank felt keenly the resentment with which his uncle spoke, because of the deception upon her father.

"Would you have advised me to make her my wife?" he asked, with bitterness in his tone. "I confessed to you everything. You must at least do me the justice and admit that I endeavored to soften the blow, and inflict as little pain as possible. I however omitted to mention to you that, in order to spare her the dread and sense of shame, I had informed her father that we were secretly married, and that it must remain a secret until the necessity for it had ceased to exist."

Frank felt sorry, very sorry, and sincerely wished that matters had turned out differently; that Clare were still alive, and would now be living where he had comfortably placed her, or anywhere else she might have chosen.

Vain regrets! Could he recall her to life? No! What use then brooding over her death, the responsibility of which must be placed more to her unreasonable and unnatural grief than to his intent. Van Alden became aware of the blind artist's and the child's whereabouts; that he—Clare's father—had spurned his uncle's offer to befriend him. In fact that he had repulsed every approachment.

It is then best to leave them alone, for the present at least, thought he.

Jack Wilmot had informed Van Alden of Martini's return to New York, and of the latter's inquiries concerning him.

"Take care, Frank!" Wilmot had said. "That fellow has not forgiven you for having alienated the crayon artist's affections. I suppose you are no longer blocking his way, since you are engaged to the handsome woman Miss Powell is reported to be. You are a lucky dog, Frank; by Jove, you are!"

"How long since that Martini has returned to the States," inquired Van Alden of his friend, paying no attention to his enthusiastic outburst.

"I met him for the first time in July; since then occasionally in society," replied Wilmot. "He has the reputation of being one of our foremost sculptors, and is received in the best houses."

"He will then have an opportunity of meeting me; besides, he knows where I can be found," rejoined Van Alden with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Helen's desire to see something of the world had been fully gratified.

Her lover's tender care, his attention to every detail which could enhance the pleasure of the journey; his experience, the knowledge of things she would most care to see, and his dear presence, all were conducive to make her trip a most delightful one.

Helen had penned to Mrs. Loewenhaupt the many impressions she had received during her travels.

I am delighted with Paris as a city, she had written; likewise with its people. There is an elegance of taste and love for the graceful, about them, which is certainly to be found nowhere else. It is not confined to the rich and great, but may be traced through almost every order or class of society, even down to the humblest. Every lady you meet is, as the French say, *bien chaussée—bien gautée*, with ornaments, if they do not match exactly her dress, are sure to accord with it. The majority of the ladies dress their hair with all the neatness and care possible. An air of elegance or neatness is, as I think, the most striking characteristic of the street costumes of the French. All the little minor matters of the toilet appear to be sedulously cared for. It is very rare to see women outrageously dressed in any way, and if one does, the probabilities are that she is not a French woman. All these impressions are extremely pleasing to the observant eye of a stranger.

The manners of the French of all classes are very agreeable. My attention being specially drawn to a woman selling fruit, I noticed her handing to an urchin customer a *sou* worth of plums. The manner she did it could be a lesson to many a refined woman.

Frank bought a bunch of roses from a street vender; it was arranged in a manner that would make it fit to come from the hands of the most skillful floral decorator. I noticed her little stock in trade set off with such felicity in the mixture of colors and the graduation of shape as made me stand to gaze more delightedly than I ever had before.

What I most admire of society here, is the entire absence of ceremony; that absence of constraint, and even tediousness of all kinds, which renders French manners so agreeable.

Society here is stripped of the ostentatious self-seeking etiquette which I perceived among the English, and even among many of our own people. The daily companionship is therefore enjoyed with a pleasant ease. The degree in which this is the case can only be guessed at by those who have the opportunity to mingle amongst them.

We spent three weeks in paris—the emporium of the world's fashion.

From Switzerland Helen wrote:

This country reminds me somewhat of Scotland. In landscape and scenic subjects the regions of Alps and lakes, of mountain passes, glaciers and pastoral valleys, picturesque old towers, hamlets and chalets, avalanches, alpine bridges, torrents, chamois and lammergeyers are exhaustless. The difficulty is, what to write about and what to omit.

The endless variety of these scenes, beautiful and interesting as they are individually, would fatigue, even as much as one's imagination may be called into play.

Among the views I have been particularly struck with, is the "Wild Kirchlein," or Hermitage. Tell's Chapel, with the lake and Alps. The Wetterhorn, the view of the Mount Pilate from Brunig, and the junction of the Rhine and Tamina.

After the numerous views we have seen of Mount Blanc, we can still admire the Monarch of Mountains, as seen here from the village of Chamouni.

The passage of Wengen-Alp into the Grindelwald, was one of the most interesting parts of our tour.

Imagine us, dear friend, seated near a blazing log of pine, in midsummer, in one of the inns, with a dish of roast chamois and rye bread on the table. Rich cream, with the very flavor of the flowers on which the cows were fed. Tired and hungry, we feasted with the greatest of relish on these luxuries of the Alps. The banquet closed with a glass of what is called the "Nectar of the Alps"—*Kirchenwasser*, of which Uncle and Frank partook; a beverage that is said to be an antidote to the cold and fatigue encountered in a journey through these regions.

I felt particularly interested in the only daughter of "mine host," a mountain beauty who had been betrothed this very day.

The happy lovers were seated in the further end of the room. With what rapture must she listen, as he (presumably) lays down the plans of their future life, and presses her to "name the day when she will consent to light

his chalet with her smiles." It must have been his question, for nothing else could have added so much to her beauty and embarrassment; and it seemed to me that she ingeniously evaded the same, but in a manner that increased her lover's importunity. She hesitated, but at last her scruples overcome, she must have named the day and hour, for a thousand anticipations of happy years flushed her cheeks, and must have likewise fluttered round the heart of the Alpine maid.

Their thoughts were manifestly too big for utterance, for they sat looking into each other's eyes silent, and, as I have no doubt, feeling happy. They, however, soon parted, and with the speed of the bouquetin the Alpine lover retraced his steps, while the newly betrothed follows his shadow as he flits along, with feelings which at once seemed to delight and distract her spirit.

Gazing at them, I pictured to myself their coming life; the Alpine's life, of which I have often read; when, as her husband, he will go forth in a cloudless sky to follow his daily vocation, though the wind may sweep howling through the gorge. Of the thoughts and fears that must beset her when the "elements let loose," foreshadow a danger he may encounter; that he must ford torrents, surmount snowy ramparts to reach his home again. With what a throbbing heart will she not watch every approach to their chalet until she joyfully espies his familiar form, fervently offering thanks to Him who has vouchsafed his safe return. Or, will she watch in vain for his return? Eventually, only to behold the wraith of her husband.

Since I have learned to love, lovers are the *protegeè* of

my thoughts, and, therefore, I mentioned this special episode of my travels.

Helen, on her return to England, had paid Lady Darvey a farewell visit.

"Brother sends his sincere regards to you, dear Helen," Lady Darvey had said to her. "He left for India on a two years' trip, and anticipates meeting you in the States on his journey homeward."

"Ethel?" said Lady Darvey, to Helen's inquiry, "She is engaged to Lord ——, or, rather, to his twenty thousand a year. At times I can't blame her. Poor thing! She would not marry the man she loved, because of his poverty; and will marry the man she does not love, because of his wealth.

"You, dear Helen," she continued, kissing her affectionately, have chosen the crown of love—the noblest sovereignty a woman can choose. God bless you, my dear girl, and grant you the happiness you so well deserve."

"You must bring Helen to us again next year, Mr. Van Alden," echoed the voices of Lord and Lady Darvey, on their leaving.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

At one of the windows of the Fifth Avenue Hotel stood Helen, apparently looking upon the throng of people passing by.

It was a bright October afternoon; many ladies were sauntering along this popular thoroughfare, where they are sure to meet friends—gentleman or lady—by chance or by appointment. They are sure of gratifying their eyes by gazing at beauty and fashion; their tongues with charitable or uncharitable criticism—how well or how horridly she is dressed or looks; and, best of all, obtain the needful exercise that brings a healthful glow of color to their pallid cheeks.

Helen's lovely face would have impressed the observant eye, that her thoughts just then were not in keeping with her eyes that were gazing, apparently, below.

No woman, be she even of a frivolous and thoughtless nature, will be spared the inquietude of the mind which an impending change to a sphere that shall fill her whole future life with happiness or misery must bring.

She had recalled to memory the following lines:

From love as men profess
  Who to charms are easy prey;
Fair maid, you must beware!
  Had'st better keep away.
'T is not love, but passion
  That stirs the fickle heart!
It will end with possession
And bring you, grief—smart.

How foolish to plague her mind? What need she fear? she reasoned with herself. She does not dream of a rose-colored existence, for she is aware that life alternates in lights and shades. She will be satisfied with the lights of love, an honest, good man brings her, which outweigh the shades the many vicissitudes of life carry with them. Thank Heaven! Frank is a good, honest and noble-minded man! Thus soliloquised Helen, endeavoring thereby to tranquilize her vague fears.

Helen, since her return to New York, had on various occasions missed her lover's wonted high spirit.

To her question as to the cause, he would reply, with a caress: "Why, my dear, 't is your imagination, nothing else;" and attempt a gaiety of manner, that seemed to her unnatural, affecting her own buoyancy of spirits.

Suddenly leaving the window, she entered the room in which Mrs. Betts was busily plying her needle.

Taking a seat by her side, she said: "Whilst I assist you, dear Marion, you must talk to me to help while the time away."

"Don't crowd yourself in here, dear child!" exclaimed Mrs. Betts. "You had better take a seat in yonder chair; it won't do to squeeze yourself in here and destroy the folds of your dress that are so becoming to you. You must look your best this afternoon," she continued, with a smile, "old eyes are sharper than young ones, and an old man's tongue will wag about women's looks and their general appearance without stint. I would rather stand the scrutiny of a dozen young than one old man," she added, mischievously. "The least the scrutiny of a widower who failed to

marry a second time because he thought that there is no woman living who could replace the treasure he had lost."

"I am informed to the contrary of what you maintain," rejoined Helen; "that widowers, with their sad experience of a first wife care not to attempt a second experiment. Really, you make me nervous because of the impending inspection I am about to undergo. I may, after all, become a rejected candidate for matrimonial honors!"

A familiar knock on the door of Helen's sitting room apprised her that the moment of the ordeal, as Mrs. Betts insinuated, had arrived.

On Van Alden's entrance, accompanied by his uncle, the former taking Helen's hand into his own, introduced her to the old gentleman, saying: "Uncle Reuben, this is my dear Helen, to whom I have no doubt you will yield a conspicuous place in your heart."

Helen gazed into the old gentleman's face with an expression of indescribable sweetness, that could not fail to charm him.

His quick glance recognized her high personal attractions. Her attire, elegant, but without the least pretence for display, enhanced the symmetry of her superb figure, assured him that she was a woman well fitted to grace the home of a Van Alden.

His eyes kindled with pleasure as he grasped her outstretched hand: "I bid the bride of my nephew a welcome to a nook in my heart," he said."

"I am glad to have met you, rejoined Helen, pleased with his cordiality, "and will be most happy if you will let me share with Frank in your affections."

"My dear child," rejoined the old aristocrat, pleasantly, "you will stand a good chance; for women are always successful competitors for our affections; 't is their vocation in life.

Turning to Frank, he continued, humorously, "I always knew you to be possessed of keen eyes; now I am thoroughly convinced of it, and must congratulate you on your conquest."

"Do not let this be altogether a one-sided affair," rejoined Frank, smiling. "I must insist on some recognition for myself as well. If from a parental-like concern," he continued, playfully, "you fear to shock my inborn modesty—a concern you failed to entertain for Helen—you must promise me, at least, that you will at the earliest opportunity—myself absent—speak to her about the good qualities her future lord and master is blessed with; the bad ones you need not mention; she must find them out herself."

"Have I shocked your modesty?" asked the old aristocrat, addressing Helen with a mirthful twinkle in his eyes. "You would then be an exception to the rule. I am told that our modern young ladies feel elated whenever their personal attractions are lauded. For my nephew's modesty," he continued, "I feel no concern. 'T is an article he and the rest of men are wanting in; but I sincerely hope that he is possessed at least of such qualities that will make him a good and loving husband, which is most essential to woman's happiness. Let it not be with you two, a question as to who loves best now, but who will endeavor best to preserve and nourish that love; so you both can partake of its blessing throughout life. You must endeavor," he now said

impressively, "to bring your flute in unison of tune, and base the plans and visions of your future upon a permanency that will make your home a temple in which you both can worship."

"You, my dear child," he said, addressing Helen, "are a magnet with the power of drawing toward yourself the husband you love; I have no doubt that you two will become a happy pair, for you are as well matched a pair as ever ran in double harness," he added laughingly.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Life's journey brings to us all, high or low born, rich or poor, some more or less happy days; times when we are oblivious to the cares besetting mankind. And when the cloudy, murky atmosphere of later years hovers over us, memory brings back the bright sunshine that illumined the happy past, helping us to reconcile ourselves with the less happy present.

Youth is blissful, and looks for continuous sunshine. Let the happy present be enjoyed to its full. Could only expostulation successfully impress them not to destroy the happy future by a wanton misuse of the present.

To Helen the days were full of perfect happiness. If she did not believe in the legends and gilded fancy of youth, yet she felt that she loved, and that she was beloved, and that the future could not fail to bring her the fulfillment of the modest wishes essential to her happiness.

Helen's sojourn in New York was a continuous round of pleasure.

She soon became aware of Frank's position in society, and noticed the favoritism he enjoyed, and the admiration with which he was looked upon by her sex.

She felt pleased because of her own cordial reception and social triumph; more for Frank's sake than her own. Whenever his eyes would rest upon her with pride, a glow of pleasure would overspread her countenance, and she would smile upon him lovingly.

Judge Brown had personally accompanied Mrs. Loring and her son to Morganville. After placing them comfortably in one of his own cottages, he returned to New York.

The Judge and the old aristocrat soon became warm friends. Both had a fatherly interest and concern in the child of their brother and sister, long since deceased.

The Judge was aware of the eminent position occupied by the Van Aldens, and rejoiced at the brilliant future awaiting his beloved niece. He felt pleased at being able to inform the old aristocrat that Helen brought to her future husband, not only the treasures of a pure mind and heart, but likewise a considerable fortune, to which communication the old aristocrat had replied that her fortune was of no concern to Frank.

It was Helen's desire to be married in the church in which her lamented parents had been united in holy matrimony, and by the venerable minister, still living, who had united them twenty-two years ago.

It was therefore arranged that Helen should return to Morganville, to remain until she left it a wife.

On the eve of Helen's departure for home, and when about entering the Fifth Avenue Hotel, she was startled by an exclamation of surprise uttered by a lady.

Turning, she met the lady's gaze fully, and a gleam of joy o'erspread her lovely face.

Darting forward and taking the outstretched hand into her own, she exclaimed: "Gertie! is it you? Your own dear self? Do I meet you once more?" Then turning to her uncle, who was with her at the time, she asked in a joyful tone: "Do you remember Gertie Howard? I am sure

Gertie remembers you; do you not?" she inquired of the latter, who, answering in the affirmative, said pleasantly: "Have I not often partaken of the sweets the Judge used to smuggle into the precincts of Mrs. Loewenhaupt's seminary? The good lady being so averse to sweets, and her pupils so fond of them!" she added with a laugh.

"No further explanations in the street," said Helen; "step in here and come to my room, for I must speak to you, Gertie, and hear all about yourself, after these many years of separation. No—not tomorrow—now. For, tomorrow we leave for home," she said, coaxingly, taking Gertie by the arm.

Helen now noticed the lovely child that accompanied her friend, which, from timidity, had taken refuge behind Gertie, but had now stepped forward.

"Are you married, and is this your child?" interrogated Helen, gazing at the little girl admiringly. "This cannot be!" she exclaimed, ere her friend could reply.

"No, dear Helen, I am not married," replied Gertie.

Gertie Howard and Helen, when schoolmates, had formed a girlish attachment for each other.

Gertie is a tall, graceful girl, with a thoughtful face; one that gains in attractiveness the oftener one sees it. It denotes strength of character by the firmly set mouth. Her dark eyes could nevertheless gaze on you softly, and impress you with the thought that their owner could feel deeply and tenderly.

Having entered her apartment, Helen embraced her friend affectionately; then scrutinizing her closely for a moment, said: "You have changed little since I saw you

last—four years ago. For three long years I have heard nothing from you; and now to meet so unexpectedly!

"Are you living in New York—in this gay metropolis?" inquired Helen, after they had seated themselves and had given the child in charge of Mrs. Betts. "It will be my fate to reside in New York in the near future," she added.

"No, Gertie," Helen continued, noticing Gertie's inquiring glance. "You must speak of yourself first; it will interest me more than speaking of myself. Later I will gratify the interest you may take in your former schoolmate; an interest I am sorry to say you failed to demonstrate by your long silence," she added reproachfully.

"In your answer to my last," rejoined Gertie, "you informed me of having left school to enter society. I thought the anticipated enjoyments were not conducive to the continuance of school girl correspondence. I am really sorry now," she added apologetically, "that I terminated our correspondence, since I find you the same dear girl as of old.

"Dear! dear!" she resumed after a moments' pause, "how wonderfully you have changed otherwise. So wonderfully!"

Helen placing her hand upon her friend's lips remarked playfully, "I enjoin you from speaking about me."

"To please you, I will obey," rejoined Gertie pleasantly. "Of what shall I speak first? of the past or present? The past, dear Helen, has been to me like it is with the many of our sex in my station of life. I have feasted on some girlish enjoyments, in an humbler way than yourself, of course, until I left home to enter upon the more serious pursuits

of life. I am now engaged in teaching in one of the public schools of New York. Life with me," she continued, "passes in an even tenor, bringing to me, if not exorbitant pleasures, at least a placid, calm, unruffled existence—which must suffice.

"My girlish dream, though, will soon be over," she added, a blush rising to her face. "'T is no romance," she remarked, noticing Helen's eager, inquiring glance; "yet it may seem so to you. I am about to be married. You will be surprised to hear that the man whom I have learned to love, and who will make me his wife, loves me not as a woman covets that the man of her choice should."

Helen did not reply at once but gazed with wonder into her friend's face. It was calm and tranquil, like one at peace with her heart and soul, and who looks forward to her coming life with no doubt or misgiving. At last she said, "I must say that you have aroused my curiosity in no small degree. If you ask me to interpret the meaning of what you have said, I would answer that your intended husband must love hopelessly—that you succeeded in softening somewhat the soreness of his heart, and that it has turned in sympathy to you."

"The woman he loved is no more among the living," replied Gertie.

"I comprehend you better now," said Helen. "He is a widower and has expended the wealth of his affection on the one he lost. The little girl with you, is she his child?"

Gertie shook her head. "The woman he loved, loved another. The child with me is her offspring, which my affianced has adopted," she replied.

"Poor child! So young and bereaved of both parents?" exclaimed Helen, the tears springing to her eyes.

Had she not herself been bereaved likewise?

"The child's father lives," said Gertie.

"And has he abandoned it to strangers?" inquired Helen in amazement. "I can understand you now. Your intended husband takes care of the child of the woman he loved, whose father has forsaken it. A man who feels and acts thus, proves himself to be one of God's noble creatures, into whose care a woman may implicitly trust her happiness. I can now comprehend your love and its romance. Having told me so much, I am inquisitive to know more."

"I speak with reluctance of the sad history of the child's mother, for it affects me whenever recalled to my memory," replied Gertie.

The reader will divine the story Gertie related to Helen.

Not for one moment did Gertie surmise how closely Helen's happiness was entwined with that of Clare's betrayer.

"Oh! had I but known it," lamented Gertie, later.

Yes! later; 'tis always later that we know better and that we would have done better, if we had only known it sooner!

Helen listened with close attention to the history of a young and beautiful woman, who had loved not wisely but too well.

"That man; the miserable, cruel wretch that he must be," exclaimed Helen, in a voice full of indignation, "can no punishment reach him? Your affianced—" Uttering the last words, Helen suddenly checked their flow.

A familiar knock at the door brought back to Helen's face the bright color and happy smile.

Hastily approaching the door by which Van Alden now entered, she lovingly took his hand and leading him toward her friend, said in a happy manner, "Let me introduce you to Mr. Frank Van Alden."

On hearing the name, Gertie's face assumed a deathly pallor. Her hand that had been outstretched to grasp his, fell benumbed to her side.

Reeling backward, as if struck by a thunderbolt, and looking aghast at Helen, she asked in a voice full of trepidation, "Did you say Frank Van Alden?"

Our hero looked with astonishment and bewilderment at the girl, whom the mere mention of his name had so strangely affected, and then gazed inquiringly at Helen for a solution of the scene.

Helen had receded a few steps, amazement depicted on her countenance.

When and where had Gertie met her lover, were the thoughts that flashed through her perplexed mind. A strange foreboding of a terrible something had taken possession of her.

To her friend's inquiry, "Did you say Frank Van Alden?" Helen nodded her head in the affirmative.

"Oh, my God! My God!" exclaimed Gertie, burying her face in her trembling hands.

Helen rushed towards her friend, and with an appealing look and trembling voice, asked: "*Is it he?*"

The door leading from Mrs. Betts' room had opened, and the child emerging therefrom ran towards Gertie, but

stopped suddenly, as if transfixed to the spot, and gazing intently into Van Alden's bewildered face, ran towards him, exclaiming with a shout of joy, "Father, dear father!"

Van Alden was dumfounded. His eyes, fixed on Gertie, were full of scorn and resentment.

A terrible friendship her's must be, who could pour into a friend's heart a poison that must destroy its happy repose. What is the meaning of all this? Why has that woman sought his beloved and affianced bride, bringing with her the child—the unfortunate offspring of his youthful guilt? Who had sent her? Such were the thoughts darting through his brain.

On hearing Helen's cry of anguish, he thrust aside the child that had clasped his knee, and rushing towards her, uttered, in a voice that was full of tenderness, "Do not, my love, condemn me unheard!"

Helen, who had buried her death-like face on Mrs. Betts' shoulder, bade him in a voice that trembled with agitation, and with a gesture of her hand, "Leave me."

Van Alden seemed rooted to the spot. "Must I go without a hearing?" he asked in a voice that bespoke the anguish of his heart.

He felt that it would be best to leave her presence now. Casting a glance of disdain on Gertie, he left the room in a dazed-like manner.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It was a dark, chilly, rainy day.

Helen was seated in her room, her trembling hands folded on her knees, with thoughts full of the last few months and days. Her dream was feverish, blurred by the anguish of the last day. A dreadful sense of unreality benumbed her spirit; she felt a wild longing to flee from its harassing pang.

Mrs. Betts entered with a tray. Gazing at her sorrowfully, she says: "How pale you look, dear Helen; you had better partake of this port wine I have brought you."

"I cannot drink it! no, I cannot," uttered Helen, her voice choked with tears, "even if my heart is chilled and faint—about to cease beating altogether."

"The Judge, has he not yet returned?" inquired Mrs. Betts, in an anxious voice. "Had I not better send for a doctor?"

"Do not fear, dear Marion, I will feel better after a while," said Helen in response. "We will not leave New York today as anticipated, perhaps tomorrow. I may feel better then.

"Go to your room," she continued, "there, dear; good, true Marion—go! I will call you, should I want you. Just now I prefer to be left to myself."

Helen only now felt how well she had fared in the world; that she had until now sailed smoothly upon its waters. The first storm that came had found her unprepared.

The happiness of a few months had led her into an abyss of misery. Love had brought sorrow to her life.

Is this the result of having striven for the highest and the best? All these months she had been drawn towards him. First he had awakened her interest until, in spite of herself, she had grown to love him, and she had not been ashamed to own her love with all the truth of which she was capable. How her soul had delighted in him, honored him. Not thinking him faultless—even full of imperfections. Yet, a good man, honorable, full of noble sympathies. And she found him a libertine, guilty of a deliberate, cruel act; the betrayer of the woman who had trusted her all into his keeping. All is over now! Her love must die—must be forgotten; her beautiful dream of happiness must be blurred from memory. She had set up an idol; but it is now shattered, and its fall has severed her very heart-strings.

The Judge had urged her to grant Frank an interview, saying that she would not be just to herself should she condemn him unheard.

She read the letter Van Alden had sent her—only a few lines—in which he beseeched her to grant him an interview, even if she decided it should be the last.

Helen had sent Frank a message naming the hour in which she would receive him.

She felt how trying the ordeal would be. Does she love him still? Her heart throbbed at the mere thought of seeing him again. Alas! only for once, and then no more. She would have forgiven him could she believe Clare Gray to have been a frail woman.

Oh! My God! How could it be! Such women, do they die of grief because of betrayed love?

Helen was unselfish, brave, gentle and pure. She cared not to enter the gates that are blurred, the pillars of which are rotten, unsafe, sure to crumble and crush the repose of her heart and soul beneath them.

Hearing Van Alden's familiar footstep, a tremor seized her. Her large, beautiful eyes stared at the door through which he must enter. She tried to steel herself for the coming ordeal. A second more and they stand face to face.

Helen endeavored to appear calm and dignified. Van Alden looked aghast on noticing the change one short day had wrought in her face—beautiful as ever, but of a deathly pallor, with its haggard look.

One would likewise have been struck by the expression of his own face, that now denoted utter hopelessness. He had been in love before, and was familiar with the signs of grief the tender passion brings forth; but he had until now failed to divine such grief as her face revealed.

"Helen!" he at last murmured, tenderly. She gazed into his face, thrilled by the tone of his voice, tears rushing to her eyes; but she remained apparently calm and composed.

"Why have you not left me alone?" she uttered in a tremulous tone. "You must have known that only misery must come to me from loving a man whose heart inflates with the dawn of morn, to collapse with the sinking sun; who robs woman's holiest, for his delectation; who passes by all other objects unmoved because of his susceptibility

for the beautiful only; who only loves the 'beautiful love' that lasts 'til he tires of it; a man—"

"As you love heaven, hear me first!" exclaimed Van Alden, with quivering lips, unable to master his agitation. Do not recall words spoken to you in the hour in which my tongue knew no guile.

"I have no wish that you should believe me better than I am; nor have I the remotest intention of painting myself with clean brushes. Beside your pure heart mine must indeed appear black. I have not spent my early life under the influence and loving care of parents, nor in the pursuit of serious aims.

"My youth and manhood even were schooled upon the race-course—called the world—I partook of the mess of gilded life that neither measure carefully gold nor discretion. To my youthful follies there was no barrier, no one checked their growth, nor curbed their indulgence. While leading such a life," he continued, in a voice that betrayed his agitation, "I—met—Clare.

"You are informed of our unfortunate relationship," he resumed after a painful silence; "of her death; of the child, and as much of the truth as your school friend knew. I understand your nature well," he continued in a tender voice," else I would not have loved you as I do. I know that you must despise me, because of what you have heard. It is not of the past I would speak to you—only that you should believe that I am not as black as they would make me.

"'T is of the future I must speak! Helen! Dear Helen!" he uttered, imploringly, "shall I not say 'quits' to the past, and continue in the new life you have taught me? I would

honestly try to win your forgiveness for the past, for I love you—believe me, dear Helen, I love you sincerely! My life henceforth would be—if not what yours has been and always will be—at least worthy of your love."

Perceiving Helen's emotion, which his pleading words had called forth, he resumed:

"Lives are often shipwrecked through some misunderstanding, and from want of an explanation that could clear the clouds shadowing the present.

"Your informant could not have told you all! That I was willing to share my fortune with Clare if I could not share my name; not because of the obscurity of her own—but from want of love for her—without which both our lives would have been void of happiness.

"Blame me if you will, but do not condemn a life that is entwined with yours. Sacrificing me cannot amend my wrong to another, nor call her back to life."

Helen had followed with deep emotion and attention every word Van Alden had spoken. In her eyes, gazing on him, gleamed the love with which, alas! her heart was filled. For a moment she looked thoughtful, and seemed to waver with the answer that must decide her fate.

At last, breaking the painful silence, she said: "I do not sacrifice you—I only sacrifice myself; not in the sense you would have me, but by deadening my womanly love. It is better that I do it at once, than that my heart shall later die a slow and agonizing death. No, no!" she continued in a tone of anguish, "I must not think of fulfilling my engagement. For the indulgence of a short dream I would be obliged to stifle all that sanctifies life.

"I know you think this unnatural. Such a thought came to me when I heard you acknowledge your wrong and your pleadings. I do not know what men recognize as right. My heart and soul would never let me do it. I know in marrying you I could not expect from you the good for myself that brought despair and death to another woman. The knowledge of it would rob me of my peace of mind, and of all that the past has made dear and holy to me."

"What a strange love yours must be, that can cast me off; that can strike such a blow!" exclaimed Van Alden. "It is impossible that you should adhere to your resolution. The feeling that draws us towards each other is far too strong to be overcome by mere will and separation!"

"Yes, I did love you! I did," said Helen, with downcast looks and a tremor in her voice; "but I must love you no longer; I must overcome it; we must separate.

"Would you have me reveal to you all that burns so fiercely within me? Must you urge my lips to utter the condemnation my mind heaps upon you? Not because of the love-rage of youth that had burned its wick to ashes on attaining manhood. We women readily grant absolution to the follies of youth, contenting ourselves with the steadier flame of manhood. 'T is the perfidy of the man that appalls me! Your manhood, too proud to repair the wrong perpetrated upon a woman, lowered itself to a deception upon an old blind father.

"Before God, and your conscience, Clare was your lawful wife; and you abandoned her to shame; offering her a measure of gold. Your generosity dug her grave, and robbed that poor blind man of his child, the child of its mother;

and you, its father, heartlessly spurned it from you when, in its exulting joy at beholding you, called you 'father.'

"I could have forgiven much, but not the heartlessness you revealed! Your love for me? If I do not doubt its sincerity now, I must doubt its constancy. With the same sincerity you had pledged yourself to that unfortunate girl! and your love proved, as you confess, a passion only. My name and station being less obscure, you offer me the strong security of the law of man. Can this vouchsafe happiness to me, knowing that you sacrificed the happiness, nay, the life of a woman who had a holy claim, if no more upon your love, at least upon your consideration and manhood.

"You have taught me a lesson I will not forget; it has afforded me an insight into your soul, that revealed to me the selfish love you are capable of."

Van Alden stood mute. His frame trembled with agitation. He knew not how to reply to her just reproaches. At last he exclaimed, passionately: "How can I assure you that ever since the day we sat upon the cliff I have striven to be worthy of you—as you would have me. But, no! you will not believe me," he continued, sadly. "Even were I to appeal to God, you would not believe me.

"And yet," he resumed, after a pause, "you might trust me—if you only would; and not shipwreck both our lives by your own act."

"It cannot be—I dare not do it," exclaimed Helen, hiding her face in her hands and striving to smother her rising sobs. "The sweetness of your love has gone from my heart and cannot come back to me again. Oh, Frank!" she continued in a tone of greater anguish than she had yet

shown, "I did not believe it at first, but now I feel how deep the dagger has pierced my heart. I could not live with you, for the face of that woman would step between our embrace, and chill its warmth. You would have me smile on you, and I could not, because of doubts and fears that would shadow my days. We must part, we must part," reiterated Helen, vainly endeavoring to conceal the anguish of her heart.

A tremor had seized her, because of the import her unswerving resolution carried with it.

On beholding Van Alden, who, the picture of despair, had sunk into a seat, she felt as if her heart must relent; and on the impulse of that feeling she added, softly: "At least —at least for the present. Prove to me the strength of your love," she continued, "by availing yourself in the future of the noble gifts with which you are so lavishly endowed.

"Years may obliterate the past and bring back to me the trust I had placed in you. Then—then"—

Ere Van Alden had lifted his gaze Helen had left the room.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

On reaching home, Gertie Howard, having changed her street attire, descended to the hall, crossed the court yard and entered the annex that had been added recently to the house, which served as a sculptor's studio.

Entering, Martini nodded a smiling welcome, saying: "I expected you home ere now. How pale you look!" he exclaimed, anxiously, noticing her wan face. "Has anything happened to you? Where is Flora?

"The dear child is with Aunt Dorothea. I met a former schoolmate unexpectedly. I sincerely wish I had not met her," she continued, in a regretful tone, and added, slowly, "she is—Van Alden's—betrothed. I am sorry you never mentioned her name to me."

Martini raised his eyes in astonishment and gazed at her inquiringly.

"Yes!" reiterated Gertie, "it was Helen Powell," and then related their meeting; how Van Alden joined them, and the child's recognition of its father.

Her communication made Martini thoughtful. After a pause he asked, "How did Miss Powell receive the tidings?"

Gertie's wan face and moistened eyes interpreted more than words could have expressed.

A sad smile illumined Martini's face. As much as he regretted that an innocent and (as he had heard), a noble-minded girl must suffer, he could not help a feeling

of satisfaction because of the knowledge that a blow had been struck to that wretch, that must make him reel and wince—at least for a time. "It is the hand of Providence!" he exclaimed. "Yes! and struck through the agency of one belonging to me."

Martini had taken apartments with Mrs. Mansfield (Gertie's aunt), with whom Gertie had lived for the past year. The young woman felt herself irresistably drawn towards the winsome child. With Martini's approval she had taken entire charge of Flora.

Gertie's sweet disposition and her fondness for the child, whose mother's sad history she had learned, tended to draw her and Martini into a friendship, culminating on Gertie's part, in a deeper sentiment.

To the motherless child Martini would secure Gertie's care and devotion. If he is unable to offer her a lover-like affection, he could at least tell her that he would make her a considerate, kind husband.

Gertie accepted what he had offered.

A smile of satisfaction o'erspread the blind artist's countenance as he listened to Martini's communication of the facts related by Gertie.

With this much he must content himself for the present. A spell of sickness confining him still to his room, had prevented the consummation of his contemplated aggressive steps.

CHAPTER XL.

Four months had elapsed since Van Alden's last interview with Helen. She had left the room ere he could collect his senses and regain his composure, that had never before so utterly deserted him. When aware that Helen had left the room he made an attempt to follow her. Finding the door barred, he implored her to listen to him, if but for a moment. The door opened, and the Judge entering, said, in a firm voice: "My niece bids me to tell you to spare her further pain. Her resolution is irrevocable. Knowing her so well, I must say that she could not have acted otherwise.

"No word of mine," he continued, "shall add to your grief—sincere at present. You must overcome it, and you will undoubtedly succeed after a time. You erred in your judgment of Helen, Mr. Van Alden, and thereby you have inflicted on her a wound which must last long and which time alone can heal."

The following day Frank had a stormy interview with his uncle.

They separated, never to meet in life again.

Van Alden undoubtedly loved Helen with as much sincerity and depth as he was capable.

Dejection took possession of him when the letter he had addressed her, explaining everything satisfactorily (as he thought), was returned to him unopened.

How cruel of her! he had exclaimed. How unfairly

she treats me. She has no right to resent a past love affair! He had kept faith with her! Where could she find a man guileless? He could have told her that it was his love for her, and his desire for an honest union with her that had impelled him, and necessitated his breaking with Clare. How heartless she must be herself, to inflict on him such cruel punishment!

Awake or with eyes closed, he could not efface from memory Helen's lovely image. And yet, he must forget her. As lovely as she is, and how much he may covet her, he would never lower his manhood to seek reinstatement in the love of a woman who could sacrifice her plighted troth because of an overwrought mind and unwarranted prudish sentiment.

His was not the sorrow, the bitter grief that springs from love not reciprocated—a grief that will sting to the quick, and tends to shipwreck the soul—nay—even life. A fury raged within his heart and mind, because, the first time in his life, his covetousness had received a check. The Eden that had opened to his gaze had suddenly closed its portals and barred his entrance.

Helen's last encouraging words had failed in their effect.

Van Alden's mind could not divine her thoughts, that were beyond his own horizon. Instead, grasping the hopes held out to him—hopes that should have been an incentive to prove the sincerity and constancy of the love Helen was justified in doubting—he applied himself to the task of forgetting the first great disappointment life had brought him.

The manner in which he attempted it—if it did not assist

him in forgetting at once—deadened, at least, the better sentiments Helen had awakened within him.

It is too sad a picture to trace his now riotous life—pampered by false conceptions, and nourished by the old habits returning to him. Nothing revenges itself so completely on us as our follies and misdeeds. Retribution is sure to come sooner or later. Few are spared!

* * * *

In front of a brown stone mansion an excited crowd of men and women had congregated and were eagerly discussing the tragedy that had been enacted within.

Policemen barred the entrance to all but the law officials.

Upon the velvet carpet in the front parlor, saturated with the warm life-blood still oozing from a wound, lies the unfortunate victim of a night's brawl.

Close to the body crouches the terrified form of a beautiful woman, her costly white dress besmeared with crimson stains. Policemen and physicians surround the lifeless body.

The following morning the papers gave a sensational account of the murder of one of New York's most prominent gentlemen, Mr. Frank Van Alden, committed in the house of the beautiful divorced wife of Mr. Robert L——, who, of late, had borne a doubtful reputation.

The woman had beguiled the wealthy young bachelor—who eventually became the object of jealousy on the part of a discarded lover. By the connivance of one of the servants, her former lover had secreted himself in the house awaiting Van Alden's visit.

On the latter's arrival he suddenly entered the parlor, and in the scuffle ensuing had taken his rival's life.

Diligent search had been instituted for the apprehension of the perpetrator of the crime; so far without result.

The many friends of the unfortunate victim will mourn the loss of a gentleman whose promising future has been nipped in the heyday of life.

CHAPTER XLI.

The picturesque town of Morganville, with its many large factories, and towering chimneys with their volumes of black smoke, denote the place as the seat of thriving industry.

Traversing the main business thoroughfare, as far as the Baptist Church, one approaches the environs inhabited by the nabobs of the town.

Judge Brown's residence is one of the handsomest with which the rising and sloping ground is studded.

In the spacious, handsome drawing room twilight had cast its shadow. Helen is seated before an upright piano. Her superbly arched fingers are gliding swiftly over the ivory keys.

Music exerts a powerful influence in soothing the troubled mind. Helen, after her return from New York, had paid a visit to her teacher and friend, and had confided to her the sorrow of her heart.

Mrs. Loewenhaupt had kissed her tenderly, saying: "You are the brave girl I always knew you to be. I fully approve of your resolution. The pillar on which you built your love, and that should have upheld it, has been shaken to its very foundation. A man in whom wealth and opulence has created an unquenching thirst for pleasure, and a proclivity that carries with it shame and despair to others, must be sickened at heart; and even a pure, good woman like yourself could not restore its soundness. Patience and

work, dear Helen, and the marvelous recuperating power of time will knit the fragments of your heart and bring to you peace and even happiness again."

Helen's life these last two months had been spent in pursuits that occupied her mind. The best remedy to allay the depression of the heart and mind, is constant occupation.

Helen's figure had somewhat lost its roundness, but nothing of its graceful elegance. Her face looked pale—barely a tint of color in it. Her beautiful hair was coiled and held together by a handsome ornament. Her dress—a black cashmere, heightened the pallor of her face.

The twilight and the early evening hours she had dedicated to rest and meditation—even if it brought to her memory the painful past.

One never craves for a bitter fruit once tasted; but it is different with the bitterness that love has brought.

An irresistible force brings to our mind again and again its first sweet dreams; the bliss with which it had filled the heart, the hopes we had built upon it, and fills us with a longing and regret for the irreparable loss.

The love Helen had renounced often came back to her. She often felt that she could receive it once more.

Alas! she thought, can there be lasting happiness in a love that brings with it doubts, fears and and even distrust.

Distrust had aroused in her the subtle poison which disorganized the foundation upon which her love was built.

A noble character like hers will remain firm to its principles, and has no difficulty in deciding what is right.

Helen grieved more because of the pain she was obliged

to inflict on Van Alden than of her own. Her revery was interrupted by approaching footsteps. To her surprise the Judge, accompanied by Phœbe Armitage, entered the room. "What brought you to me, dear Phœbe, at this time of day?" she exclaimed, in astonishment, greeting her affectionately.

"What sober faces you both have," she added, noticing their sad look. "Has your husband disappointed you, and not returned from New York? And you, dear Uncle, have you lost an important law suit?"

"Oh! I understand you now," she said, with a smile. "Misery loves company, and you two have entered into a co-partnership for this evening; but do not count on me to become the third to the compact. No such thing, for I feel unusually happy this evening. Mrs. Loring is progressing so nicely; Dr. Morgan assures me of her ultimate recovery."

"The dear girl that you are," rejoined Phœbe, "to rejoice in the good fortune of others while bravely fighting your own sorrows. Yes, dear Helen," she continued, "I feel miserable; the Judge feels miserable—we all feel miserable." Saying this she burst into sobs.

Helen seemed calm; only a slight quivering of her lips betrayed her agitation. She gazed inquiringly into the Judge's pale face, who had not spoken a word. Approaching Mrs. Armitage, Helen seated herself upon a low stool, close to her friend, and asked: "Is it your misfortune or mine that brought you here, and that makes you so miserable? I would rather it were mine," she continued, "for I am steeled to all that may come to me. Tell me—that it

is not yours—do! Please, dear Phœbe—tell me—is it mine?"

Receiving no reply, Helen again gazed at the Judge inquiringly, and now beheld the tears that had stolen into his eyes. "I know now, dear Phœbe, that it is mine. Why, shedding tears! Look—mine are dry. Really, dear Phœbe, you are foolish to take it so to heart, when I,—divining,—remain calm.

"He—is he engaged—or married?" she now asked, with a tremor in her voice. "If so, you need not grieve. 'T is true, I told him to come to me again; but I told him that much for his sake—not for mine; he had seemed so wretched. If he has forgotten me so soon—the better for him.

"Not married!" Helen exclaimed, perceiving her friend's nod in the negative. "Is he ill—dangerously ill?" she queried, anxiously, "have I hit him so hard that he reeled upon the sick bed? He must love me better than I thought him capable." Rising suddenly to her feet, and hastily approaching the Judge, she threw herself, with a sob, on his breast, saying, "I must go to him; indeed, I must."

The Judge, bending his head, imprinted a tender kiss upon her brow, and said, solemnly, "My dear child, he has been unworthy of your love; to his memory, even, you must close your heart; waste not one stroke of its pulsation, but pray that God will have mercy on his soul."

* * * *

The gilded iron gates are swinging on their massive hinges and are opening to the solemn funeral cortege

approaching its sacred precinct that is about to receive and harbor the clay of one who had borne an honored name, and had been destined to add, if possible, to its lustre, but whose last breath had cast a shadow—nay,—brought disgrace upon it.

A mighty power had been left to his keeping—a power for good or evil,—that could have brought him all life is worth living for. Misusing it, it had turned on him and inserted its fangs into his body and soul, thereby avenging its abuse.

The icy, blustering wind jerked the wreaths of white flowers decorating the bejewelled coffin, tossing them in the air and scattering them gently upon the tombstones of both his parents.

A thrill of awe shot through the mourners assembled around the grave, on beholding the coffin denuded of the emblems of purity.

CHAPTER XLII.

Two years have elapsed. Reuben Van Alden with little Flora stands before his nephew's grave and the one adjoining, in which Clare's body had been reinterred.

The old aristocrat had set the law in motion, and the tribunal had vindicated Clare by a decree that she had been Van Alden's lawful wife—the child to be his lawful heiress.

Tears moisten his eyes as they scatter flowers upon the graves.

In a palatial mansion, awaiting the return of Reuben Van Alden and Flora, sits the blind artist. On their entrance he kisses his grandchild tenderly; then addressing the old aristocrat, says, "I can only pray for the well-being of this, to us both, dear child. You, my friend, must watch over her welfare.

Reuben Van Alden presses the blind man's hand, and with deep feeling says: "I shall do my duty towards her."

* * * *

It is the last stroke upon his latest work. Martini's masterpiece is finished.

Gertie, his wife, with her first born on her knee, gazes on Clare's life-like bust. Turning lovingly to her husband, she exclaims: "Poor Clare! had she known you as I know you, where would I have found such happiness as mine?"

Martini looks into the bright, happy face, and, with a

mischievous smile, rejoins: "In the love of a better man than myself."

* * * *

The church is thronged: its approaches are lined with spectators, for one of the handsomest and foremost young ladies of Morganville is about to become the wife of an Englishman—a member of Parliament.

A hush spreads over the assemblage.

The peals of Mendelssohn's Wedding March sound in their ears.

Presently the bride, leaning on the arm of the bridegroom, followed by the Judge and friends, emerge from the sacred edifice, and enter the carriages in waiting.

An hour later Helen is bidding farewell to the Judge, who, clasping her tightly to his heart, says: "God bless you, my dear child. I am happy in the knowledge that you have found the happiness you so well deserve."

* * * *

"Dear, dear Helen! How happy I am!" exclaimed Lady Darvey, embracing her affectionately. "My brother brought you no ducal crown, but a royal heart. He loved you all these years, and at last his love has been rewarded with yours. Am I right?"

Helen blushes crimson as she gazes lovingly into her husband's face.

Herbal's happy smile tells all.

THE END.